# TRANSNATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE NEED FOR MULTINATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IN ASEAN

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Recently, the association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has accelerated the process of realizing an ASEAN community in 2015 through implementing holistic and synergistic solutions with an emphasis on military cooperation. Economic development and political stability in the region facilitate the expansion of the defense cooperative agenda, which has been marked by the inceptions of ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus. However, the military cooperative sphere is considered to be lagging behind and remains a domain waiting for improvemnet. This thesis ascertains that there is a need for stronger and closer military cooperation and coordination under ASEAN frameworks to address transnational security challenges in the region. It starts by highlighting key ASEAN security architectures, major developments and predominant patterns of military ties in Southeast Asia. This research then scrutinizes the strategic context surrounding ASEAN military cooperative practices by closely looking at each member country's perspective on security cooperation. The strategic importance of ASEAN's geographic location and its combined military capabilities as well as the serious security issues that confront the region are examined. Analyses of two case studies-the international search for the missing Malaysian Airline flight 370 and the Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP) are presented as a way to identify the benefits that multilateral military cooperation in ASEAN can create and the obstacles to such an approach. The thesis concludes by asserting that multilateral milirary cooperation under ASEAN frameworks is necessary to tackle transnational security issues in the region.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

TRANSNATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE NEED FOR MULTINATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION IN ASEAN, by CPT Tran Duc Huong, 116 pages.

Recently, the association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has accelerated the process of realizing a closer-knit ASEAN community by 2015 through implementing holistic and synergistic solutions with an emphasis on military cooperation. Economic development and political stability in the region facilitate the expansion of a cooperative agenda defense which has been marked by the inception of regular sessions of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus. However, the military cooperation sphere is considered to be lagging behind and remains a domain waiting for improvement.

This thesis ascertains that there is a need for stronger and closer military cooperation and coordination under the ASEAN framework in order to address transnational security challenges in the region. It starts by highlighting key ASEAN security architectures, major developments, and predominant patterns of military ties in Southeast Asia. This research then scrutinizes the strategic context surrounding ASEAN military cooperative practices by closely looking at each member country's perspective on security cooperation. The strategic importance of ASEAN's geographic location and its combined military capabilities as well as the serious security issues that confront the region are examined. Analyses of two case studies—the international search for the missing Malaysian Airlines flight 370, and the Malacca Strait Patrols, are presented as a way to identify the benefits that multilateral military cooperation in ASEAN can create and the obstacles to such an approach. The thesis concludes by asserting that multilateral military cooperation under the ASEAN framework is necessary to tackle transnational security issues in the region.

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# ACRONYMS

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| ADMM | ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting |
| ADMM-Plus | ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus |
| APSC | ASEAN Political Security Community |
| ARF | ASEAN Regional Forum |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| EiS | Eyes in the Sky |
| EWG | Experts' Working Group |
| HADR | Humanitarian Assistance and Natural Disaster Relief |
| MSP | Malacca Strait Patrols |
| MSSP | Malacca Straits Sea Patrols |

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

> Modern history has rarely witnessed Defense Ministers and Minister Representatives from eighteen countries worldwide gathering not for wars, but for practical defense and security cooperation for peace, stability, and development as what we are seeing today.[1]
>
> — General Phung Quang Thanh, Ministry of National Defense of Vietnam

The ASEAN nations, each with their own unique national history, are striving to speak with a collective voice, interact with other nations using a shared identity, and pursue mutually beneficial visions. Occupying three percent of the total land area on earth, ASEAN comprises eight percent of the world population, and ranks as the eighth largest economy in the world.[2] ASEAN is a phenomenon in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of relatively stable politics and fast developing economies. Located in a strategically significant geographic location, the members of ASEAN understand that military cooperation can help maximize potential opportunities and address security challenges. Transnational security challenges ranging from natural disasters, maritime insecurity, and potential breakouts of pandemics to acts of terrorism are present throughout the region. No single nation can effectively solve such problems by itself. ASEAN needs to develop military ties as a way to promote collective security for all the

[1] Thanh Q. Phung, *Chairman's Statement on the First ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus* (Vietnam 2010 ASEAN Defense-Military Meetings, Hanoi, Vietnam, Ministry of National Defense of Vietnam, May 2011).

[2] Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia, "Forecast: ASEAN GDP, Share in Global GDP and GDP/Capita," accessed April 8, 2014, http://www.miti.gov.my/cms/documentstorage/com.tms.cms.document.Document_a57a7f25-c0a81573-26b77801-1db7ef3e/ASEAN_GDP%20Forecast.pdf.

member nations. The current level of military cooperation and coordination is far below its potential in coping with security issues in Southeast Asia.

This thesis addresses the significance of having multilateral defense coordination and cooperation in ASEAN. It examines why ASEAN needs a constructive and effective community to tackle security challenges, and contribute to peace and stability in the region. Assessing military cooperation and coordination in ASEAN and its role in handling security challenges requires knowledge of ASEAN's history and the evolution of its framework of cooperation.

## The History of ASEAN and Its Cooperative Frameworks and Mechanisms

Competition among the great powers, mainly the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, for influence in Southeast Asia led directly to the birth of ASEAN. Jeannie Henderson in "Reassessing ASEAN," described ASEAN as the "son of the Cold War."[3] ASEAN was established by means of the Bangkok Declaration of August 8, 1967 issued by its five founding states; namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Despite being born in a challenging time, the stated goal of ASEAN was not to oppose or align against any other countries, but to serve the mutual benefit of its members. Thus, the goal was to foster multifaceted cooperation in economic, social, cultural, technical, educational, and other fields.

At the time it was established, ASEAN's expressed desire was to "promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the

[3] Jeannie Henderson, *Reassessing ASEAN* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9.

relationships among the countries of the region, and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter" for a prosperous and peaceful regional community.[4] ASEAN, at the outset, had neither a conventional, collective defense focus, nor a shared security function, as stated by Michael Leifer in his book, *The ASEAN Regional Forum.*[5] Initially ASEAN had no intention to form a military bloc. Its focus was on inward cooperation and confidence building. ASEAN's founding declaration made no mention of an overt security role.[6] This allowed ASEAN to co-exist and expand in an environment where big powers were forthrightly exerting their influence.

Over the years, norms and cooperation mechanisms in ASEAN have gradually taken shape and evolved. ASEAN's cooperative efforts and firm commitments to regional peace and stability were clearly reflected in the Declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Kuala Lumpur in 1971, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia signed in Bali in 1976. Both documents expressed ASEAN members' aspirations and consistent stand for "perpetual peace, everlasting amity, and cooperation among the people of Southeast Asia, which would contribute to their strength, solidarity, and closer relationship."[7] The vision was of a region free from

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[4] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) Bangkok," ASEAN Secretariat, August 8, 1967, accessed April 2, 2014, http://www.asean.org/news/item/ the-asean-declaration-bangkok-declaration.

[5] Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN's Model of Regional Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia Indonesia, February 24, 1976," ASEAN Secretariat, accessed April 2,

any form or manner of interference by outside powers. The 1976 treaty highlighted ASEAN's fundamental principles including mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; renunciation of the threat or use of force; and effective cooperation among themselves.[8] Those norms allowed ASEAN to overcome difficult times while avoiding conflicts during the Cold War era.

ASEAN emerged from the Cold War as the region's pre-eminent institution.[9] After the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became less involved in the region, and China redirected its primary focus to developing its own domestic economy. This paved the way for Southeast Asia to thrive. Since then, ASEAN has experienced rapid expansion, institutionalization of mechanisms for integration and cooperation, and phenomenal growth in eco-social development. During the fifteen years from 1984 to 1999, the number of members of ASEAN doubled to ten. Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Laos, and Myanmar were added to the membership, thus constituting the ten member states of ASEAN today.

As ASEAN expanded, a number of integration and cooperation frameworks have been gradually constituted and adopted. A key milestone was the establishment of the

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2014, http://www.asean.org/news/ item/treaty-of-amity-and-cooperation-in-southeast-asia-indonesia-24-february-1976-3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Henderson, *Reassessing ASEAN*, 9.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994. The purpose of ARF was to intensify multilateral dialogues in political and security matters with the declared objective of developing "a predictable and constructive pattern of relationships in the Asia-Pacific."[10] The Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone was signed the following year in Bangkok, once again affirming ASEAN member countries' commitment to collective peace and stability as well as to the global non-proliferation regime. ASEAN's integration and cooperation frameworks and mechanisms have continued to evolve over time. Member countries consented to establish an ASEAN community in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II, 2003).[11]

The ASEAN community concept is constructed on three pillars including the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Social-Cultural Community (ASCC). On the thirtieth anniversary of ASEAN in 1997, ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Vision 2020 agreeing on "a shared vision of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development in a community of caring societies."[12] Recently, ASEAN member states have reaffirmed their robust commitments to realizing the ASEAN community by 2015.

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[10] Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, 22.

[11] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)," ASEAN Secretariat, accessed April 9, 2014, http://www.asean.org/news/item/declaration-of-asean-concord-ii-bali-concord-ii.

[12] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "Overview," ASEAN Secretariat, accessed April 9, 2014, http://www.asean.org/asean/about-asean.

Proactive participation in the international economic integration process within the framework of its cooperation mechanisms has allowed ASEAN countries to develop their economies and societies at an impressive pace. In the globalized era, the ASEAN region has emerged as a dynamic and successful group in terms of economic growth rates and outputs. In fact, ASEAN's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) experienced a threefold increase over the last decade from $483.057 billion in 1998 to $1.513 trillion in 2008,[13] and a fivefold surge to $2.3 trillion in 2012 in comparison with 1998.[14] ASEAN enjoys one of the highest economic growth rates of any region in the world.[15] A similar trend has also occurred in ASEAN's import and export sectors with increases of 256 percent and 280 percent, respectively, in the same two periods. The lion's share of ASEAN's trade commerce from and to the outside world is transported through the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea, where maritime insecurity has required multilateral military cooperation to assure the flow of goods. ASEAN's robust economic growth affords more money to spend on defense cooperation, which also facilitates economic development in the region.

[13] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Community in Figures 2010," April 1, 2011, accessed April 22, 2014, http://www.asean.org/resources/item/asean-community-in-figures-acif-2010.

[14] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN GDP Remains Robust, Backed by Services," ASEAN Secretariat, October 21, 2013, accessed April 22, 2014, http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-gdp-remains-robust-backed-by-services.

[15] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Economic Community FactBook," ASEAN Secretariat, February 1, 2011, accessed April 23, 2014, http://www.asean.org/resources/item/asean-economic-community-factbook-2.

Economic success does not mean that ASEAN is immune from security challenges. This region, in fact, is facing many impending transnational security threats ranging from natural disasters, maritime insecurity, widespread pandemics, piracy, transnational crimes, and terrorism to territorial disputes and internal turbulence. Understanding that these threats cannot be solved unilaterally, or even bilaterally, ASEAN countries have employed synergistic measures to address those threats with an emphasis on multilateral military cooperation to improve the security climate.

## ASEAN's Geographic Location: Advantages, Vulnerabilities,and Military Cooperation

The unique geographic location of ASEAN brings with it both potential for advancement and vulnerabilities. Observers looking at a map of the Southeast Asia region can easily recognize that it has the shape of a circle with a hole at the center. The ten small and medium-sized member countries are spread out over a large area, of which three-fourths is covered by water. The combined land area of ASEAN is 4,492,820 square kilometers (2,791,708 square miles). However, it is not so much the land as the sea that dominates the region.[16]

Dominating the intersection between the Indian and Pacific Oceans with one of the busiest commercial waterways in the world, ASEAN member nations not only face unprecedented opportunities to develop and integrate their economies, but also maritime

[16] Jonathan Rigg, *Southeast Asia: A Region in Transition* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), 2.

security challenges and territorial issues. Almost three-fourths of global maritime commerce passes through the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea.[17]

Due to its unique geographic shape, ASEAN is very vulnerable to security challenges, which, if not collectively addressed, may slow down the development pace, and destabilize the whole region. ASEAN requires stronger multilateral military cooperation to safeguard its members' mutual interests as well as to address current security challenges.

ASEAN suffers more natural disasters than any other region in the world because of its location in the tropical zone surrounded by oceans. Moreover, the physical dispersal of its members hinders the ASEAN integration process to some extent. Multiple military cooperation and coordination arrangements alone may not completely solve problems in the areas of maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance and natural disaster relief (HADR) as they arise, but they will certainly result in a more effective and constructive response.

To this purpose, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meetings' (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, along with other existing regional mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forums (ARF), are designed to create a new security architecture in the region.[18] These steps set the stage to lay out a firm foundation for closer, future multilateral military ties within ASEAN. Continued evolution toward a military

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[17] David J. Berteau and Michael J. Green, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), accessed April 25, 2014, http://csis.org/files/publication/120814_FINAL_PACOM_optimized.pdf.

[18] Ibid.

community, or at least the establishment of a military standing body for regional military coordination and cooperation, will enable ASEAN to respond effectively and collectively to its security concerns. Integrating militarily will require all member states to have the political will to get the mission off the ground.

Although it has successfully integrated economically, politically, and socially, ASEAN has not fully developed its potential in terms of defense cooperation. Member states are accelerating the process of realizing the ASEAN community by 2015, anchored on three pillars, namely APSC, AEC, and ASCC.[19] These areas are equally important and consequently need to receive equal attention. The defense sector within ASEAN, if combined as a whole, has significant capabilities. However, this area currently lags behind the others and is not being adequately utilized.[20] This situation may potentially delay the rate of progress and economic development of ASEAN's member nations and their peoples.

## Research Questions

Primary question: What are the potential benefits and challenges of greater multilateral military-to-military coordination and cooperation within the ASEAN framework?

Secondary questions: How does each ASEAN member country view its security interests in the region? What are the key cooperation frameworks and mechanisms existing in ASEAN that guide military cooperation? How does ASEAN's geographic

[19] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Bali Concord II."

[20] Phung, *Chairman's Statement*, 27.

location affect its security situation? What are ASEAN's combined military capabilities? What are the current security challenges ASEAN nations are facing? What are the ongoing military ties in the region and how effective are they? What are barriers to multinational coordination and cooperation in ASEAN? What kind of organizational structure in ASEAN should be set up to facilitate its military cooperation?

## Assumptions

To ensure the continuing relevance of this research, some assumptions are made. First, this study assumes that Southeast Asia will remain a stable region without a major intra-member conflict or a conflict with external actors in the near future. Second, it assumes that the ASEAN member countries and key players, such as China and the United States, maintain current foreign policies. The third assumption is that ASEAN members and their partners remain committed to ADMM and ADMM-Plus cooperative frameworks. The final assumption is that all the member states recognize that transnational security challenges confronting Southeast Asia require more resources than any one nation possesses.

## Limitations

This paper will scrutinize the possibility of an ASEAN military arrangement in terms of coping with transnational challenges. The areas of common concern that all the member states identify as a focus of military cooperation will be addressed. On the other hand, the paper will not discuss the likelihood of building a military bloc in ASEAN in order to solve conventional threats.

## Delimitations

This research limits itself to two representative case studies. It will not discuss the advocacy of an ASEAN military pact to cope with conventional threats. Rather, it focuses on domains of military cooperation on which members agree under existing ASEAN frameworks.

## Significance

This study will be conducted in a context where member states collectively work to realize the goals of an ASEAN community by 2015, making this thesis both timely and relevant. The identification of both potential benefits and hurdles in the process of strengthening multilateral military cooperation in Southeast Asia will provide a reference point for regional policy-makers as they consider workable measures to implement ASEAN's military cooperative agenda. Moreover, this research promotes the study of multilateral defense collaborations in ASEAN, an area that scholars generally regard as too difficult and ineffective in the Southeast Asian context. Ultimately, success in integrating the militaries of ASEAN members to respond to transnational security challenges could potentially contribute to greater military cooperation and the strengthening of the political-security pillar among its members through harmonizing relationships, building trust and confidence, and ruling out the likelihood of intra-member conflict.

## Conclusion

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been a successful economic and cultural community. Strategically situated at the intersection between the Indian and

Pacific Oceans, ASEAN is facing both opportunities and challenges. Never in its history, have member countries been more vulnerable to security issues ranging from natural disasters, piracy, and terrorism to transnational crimes and territorial disputes. Unilateral national approaches to those challenges seem inadequate and ineffective. ASEAN's members need comprehensive integration, not only economically and politically, but in the military sphere as well. A multinational military arrangement within ASEAN to tackle those challenges will foster security and stability in the region and ultimately contribute to realizing the peaceful goals of the ASEAN community.

Notwithstanding the present breakthrough in formulating multilateral military cooperation mechanisms, a joint standing military body is absent from ASEAN headquarters. This absence will impede further defense ties, and limit ASEAN's ability to respond collectively and effectively to security issues. Inconsistent political will, differing perceptions of security threats, variations in the military capabilities of member states, limited resources, variations in national self-interest, and differences in language and military doctrines, all contribute to slowing down the process of military integration in Southeast Asia. This thesis will argue for the necessity of having a more integrated multilateral defense coordination and cooperation in ASEAN to address security problems of common concern effectively.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to develop insights about the defense cooperative practices in ASEAN, previous literature on this subject must be considered. There have been a number of writings about military-to-military ties within ASEAN, manifesting both optimism and pessimism as well as advocacy and opposition. This chapter starts by reviewing material on the core framework as well as on the mechanisms that guide security cooperation in ASEAN. Second, it highlights security interests from each member country's perspective. Third, it stresses the primary security threats that confront ASEAN, while synthesizing and analyzing ASEAN military capabilities in terms of promoting collective security. The chapter concludes by discussing primary schools of thought on ASEAN military cooperation trends and prospects.

## ASEAN Principal Security Cooperation Frameworks and Mechanisms

After over forty-seven years of creating, building, and developing, ASEAN has evolved a comprehensive set of cooperation frameworks and mechanisms. Among the most important are the ASEAN Chapter, ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) Blueprint, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), and ADMM-Plus frameworks that guide and drive both current and future military cooperation practices in the region.

Having had no written constitution over the first forty years of its existence, launching a charter marked a milestone in the history of ASEAN. It was a momentous achievement as ASEAN was doing its utmost to consolidate, integrate, and transform itself into a true regional community. The ASEAN Charter came into force on

December 15, 2008, serving as a constitution for ASEAN. In security matters, the charter spells out the purposes of ASEAN in maintaining and enhancing peace, security, and stability, and further strengthening peaceful values in the region.[21]

The ASEAN Charter emphasizes the role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in a regional security architecture intended to respond effectively to all forms of threats, and trans-boundary challenges. The ultimate goal is to strengthen cooperation by creating a safe, secure, and harmonious environment that enables the people and member states of ASEAN to live in peace with the world at large.[22] The adoption of the charter gives ASEAN a legal personality, and paves the way for greater institutionalization and consolidation of its agreements and mechanisms of cooperation. The ASEAN Charter offers a broad framework for security cooperation at the macro level, and opens the way to more specific military cooperation and coordination in the region.

Guided by the ASEAN charter, the APSC Blueprint manifests its ambition and specifies concrete steps for constructing an ASEAN community by mapping out a roadmap and timetable to realize an ASEAN political security community by 2015.[23] Under the APSC Blueprint, ASEAN is pursuing a rules-based community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable, and resilient region with shared

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[21] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "The ASEAN Charter," ASEAN Secretariat, January 2008, accessed April 20, 2014, http://www.asean.org/archive/publications/ASEAN-Charter.pdf.

[22] Ibid., 5.

[23] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Political- Security Community Blueprint," ASEAN Secretariat, June 2009, accessed April 21, 2014, http://www.asean.org/archive/5187-18.pdf.

responsibility for comprehensive security; and a dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. Significantly, the APSC presents a comprehensive approach to security, which acknowledges the interwoven relationships between all dimensions of security, political, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental developments. The APSC fosters pacific settlements for differences and disputes while encouraging the renunciation of the threat or use of force at the same time. It upholds existing ASEAN political instruments such as the Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in South East Asia (TAC) and the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), which play a pivotal role in the area of confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy, and pacific approaches to conflict resolution. It also seeks to address non-traditional security issues.[24]

The APSC Blueprint also designates key areas with the potential for strengthening security ties in the region. In this regard, it specifies activities that ASEAN members have to undertake. Key areas of emphasis include strengthened cooperation on disaster management and emergency response; effective and timely responses to urgent issues or crises affecting ASEAN; the promotion of maritime safety, and search and rescue; humanitarian assistance; and intensified counterterrorism efforts. The Blueprint especially underlines confidence building measures through promoting greater transparency and understanding of defense policies and security perceptions as well as

[24] Ibid., 2.

the evolution of norms that further ASEAN defense and security cooperation.[25] The APSC Blueprint acts as guideline with the aim to steer diverse security cooperation practices into a focused direction to address key security issues in which the ASEAN militaries can play a more constructive and effective part.

The high level of commitment and determination, and collective efforts in building APSC led to the establishment of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM Plus. ADMM is a breakthrough in the defense cooperation sphere, and is the highest military consultative and cooperative mechanism within ASEAN. For the first time in its history, ASEAN members explicitly discuss security problems of common concerns and seek practical defense arrangements in the region.

Founded in 2006, ADMM meets annually with the aim to intensify and deepen military cooperation in security areas in order to respond jointly and effectively to all forms of threats, including new and emerging security challenges. Over the first eight years of its existence and operation, the tangible results ADMM has generated are commendable. Significant achievements include the successful conduct of the second ASEAN militaries' humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise (AHX), the establishment of peacekeeping training center networks and military industry cooperation between ASEAN member states.[26] ADMM reached a new height of mutual trust and consensus by initiating ASEAN defense interaction programs, and inaugurating a logistic

[25] Ibid., 9.

[26] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Defense Ministers Want to Do More for Peace and Security," ASEAN Secretariat, October 25, 2011, accessed April 26, 2014, http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-defense-ministers-want-to-do-more-for-peace-and-security?category_id=27.

support framework to mobilize military assets and capabilities as appropriate to cope cohesively with security challenges.[27]

Embracing a policy of being open and outward looking, and seeking a more proactive and pivotal role to play both within and outside Southeast Asia, the initiative of ADMM Plus was launched. Modern history has never experienced such an event in which the eighteen defense ministers gathered not to prepare for war, but to enhance peace and security through the pursuit of establishing a more practical, regional defense. U.S Defense Secretary, Chuck Hagel, expressed his pleasure and confidence, "I see this second ministerial of the ADMM-Plus as a landmark event. . . . I am proud that the United States has been a partner and participant all along the way."[28]

The ADMM-Plus is composed of the defense ministers of ten ASEAN member states and eight Dialogue Partners, namely Australia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. ADMM Plus has been convened twice; the first time in Hanoi in 2010, and the second in Brunei Darussalam in 2013. The frequency of ADMM-Plus used to be every three years, but has now increased to being biennial.

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[27] Ministry of Defense of Singapore, "Joint Declaration of the 7th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting," MINDEF, last updated May 7, 2013, accessed April 9, 2014, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2013/may/07may13_nr/07may13_fs.html#.U_wcA08cTIU.

[28] United Press International, "ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus Ends, Joint Declaration Signed," August 30, 2013, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/08/30/ASEAN-Defense-Ministers-Meeting-Plus-ends-joint-declaration-signed/UPI-18761377857943/#ixzz30b3erMF0.

The purpose of the ADMM Plus, as an integral part of the ADMM, is to "work towards enhancing regional capacity and joint capabilities in addressing defense and security challenges of mutual interest by promoting capacity-building through greater engagements and interactions, enhancing interoperability through training and joint exercises, and establishing mechanisms for effective response."[29] At the inaugural ADMM-Plus, the Defense Ministers assented to pursue five areas of practical cooperation. These areas of mutual concern are humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, military medicine, counter-terrorism, and peacekeeping operations.[30] An Experts' Working Group (EWG) was formed for each area to expedite cooperation.

Under the ADMM Plus framework, ASEAN has successfully conducted a number of multinational exercises. They include the humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and military medicine exercise held in Brunei, the counter-terrorism exercise conducted in Indonesia, and the maritime security exercise hosted by Australia. These exercises affirm the determination and collective efforts of ASEAN member states and their dialogue partners to address security issues in a joint and constructive fashion.

In summary, ASEAN has developed an all-inclusive set of security and defense cooperative frameworks and mechanisms. Of these, the ADMM and ADMM Plus play a

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[29] ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting, "ADMM Plus Joint Declaration," August 29, 2013, accessed May 1, 2014, https://admm.asean.org/index.php/2012-12-05-19-05-19/admm-plus/2013-01-30-04-31-02.html.

[30] Ibid., 2.

pivotal role in deepening and widening military-to-military cooperation and coordination in the region.

## ASEAN Member Countries' Perceptions of Security Interestsin Southeast Asia

The future of multilateral defense cooperation in ASEAN will largely depend on each member state's perception of its security interests in Southeast Asia. How the members of ASEAN perceive their collective responsibility in solving transnational security challenges is worth considering. Both "Issues for Engagement: Asia Perspectives on Transnational Security Challenges"[31] and "ASEAN Security Outlook 2013"[32] manifest perceptions of security interests of the ASEAN member states, which unite and divide ASEAN.

Brunei, despite of being the least populous and the second smallest nation in ASEAN, is a very proactive member in the region. Immediately after independence, Brunei joined, becoming the sixth member of ASEAN in 1984. Since then, Brunei has always placed its membership of the Association as a top priority in its foreign policies.[33] Additionally, Brunei's White Paper articulates its endeavor to contribute to a stable

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[31] David Fouse, eds., *Issues for Engagement: Asian Perspectives on Transnational Security Challenges* (Hawaii: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2010), accessed May 15, 2014, http://www.apcss.org/Publications/ ISSUES%20FOR%20ENGAGE MENT%206%2025%2010%20(2).pdf.

[32] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," ASEAN Secretariat, October 17, 2013, 25, accessed May 20, 2014, http://www.asean.org/ resources/publications/asean-publications/item/asean-security-outlook-2013.

[33] Australian Government-Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Brunei Darussalam Country Brief," accessed May 26, 2014, https://www.dfat.gov.au/ geo/brunei/brunei_brief.html.

region.[34] Under the ASEAN-led mechanisms, Brunei has fulfilled its responsibilities, including the hosting the second ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise (2nd AHX) and the first ADMM Plus HADR/Military Medicine Exercise in 2013 as well as participating in the peace-keeping and monitoring missions in Lebanon and in the Southern Philippines. Like other nations in Southeast Asia, Brunei is confronting a number of transnational security challenges ranging from natural disasters and communicable diseases to sea insecurity and territory disputes. Because of a strong political commitment and shared security concerns with other ASEAN nations, Brunei will continue to be a responsible and proactive player working for regional stability.

ASEAN's newest member, Cambodia, under the influence of China, has implemented security cooperation policies inconsistent with those of ASEAN, and its contributions to ASEAN security are sometimes questionable. Cambodia, which endured a genocide, is facing serious security concerns like drug and human trafficking, smuggling of small arms, terrorism, and infectious diseases.[35] Cambodia, on the one hand, makes full use of ASEAN's current multilateral security frameworks to solve its security problems; on the other hand, it willingly pursues its national interests at the expense of ASEAN's goals. Despite having actively engaged in regional and international security practices and its fulfillment of the ASEAN chairmanship in 2012,[36] Cambodia was criticized for its failure to pass a joint communiqué at the ASEAN

34 Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 25.

35 Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 63.

36 Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 22.

meeting it hosted. When Cambodia chaired and hosted the 2012 ASEAN Summit, Cambodian diplomats obstructed the organization from raising a shared concern over South China Sea territorial disputes in the joint declaration.[37] The lack of a direct national interest in the South China Sea and great pressure from China explains why Cambodia endeavored to keep the South China Sea issue off the official agenda of ASEAN.[38] Pursuit of its narrow national interests and the influence by big powers has prevented Cambodia from playing a more constructive part in the ASEAN security stage.

Indonesia, an archipelagic state with a thousand islands, is the most critical stakeholder in ASEAN's security architecture because of the size of its population and economy, geographic location, and internal instability. Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim country and fourth most populous nation. It is an economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia, and is "recognized by the other members as first among equals."[39] The success of building an ASEAN community will depend on Indonesia's stability and active participation. Indonesia's future role in the region is well understood by both its leaders and the public. While its leaders seek to transform Indonesia into a strong,

[37] H. Hai Nguyen, "Time to Reinterpret ASEAN's Consensus Principle," East Asia Forum, July 27, 2012, accessed May 11, 2014, http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/07/27/time-to-reinterpret-asean-s-consensus-principle/.

[38] Robert Sutter and Chin-Hao Huang, "China-Southeast Asia Relations: Hu visits Cambodia as the South China Sea Simmers," Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2012, accessed May 11, 2014, http://csis.org/files/publication/1201qchina_seasia.pdf.

[39] Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 157.

international leader,[40] the Indonesian public welcomes and supports the realization of an ASEAN community as beneficial, not only to their country, but also to their society and economy.[41] Indonesia was a pioneer in getting ASEAN's 2003 Political Security Community initiatives off the ground, and played a pivotal role in drafting the Plan of Action for the ASEAN Security Community in 2004.[42] What is more, Indonesia's security problems, ranging from terrorist threats and separatist movements to piracy and natural disasters, encourage Indonesia to play a more robust role in the ASEAN security community.[43] In short, as a primary actor that shares common security concerns with the other members, Indonesia is a key security player in Southeast Asia.

Laos, the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia, expresses a strong commitment to fruitful relationship with ASEAN. Thongsing Thammavong, the Prime Minister of Laos, on the forty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN and fifteenth anniversary of Laos' accession to the Association, was so pleased to say, "Laos' membership of ASEAN bears fruits."[44] Since its independence, Laos has consistently

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Guido Benny and Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Indonesian Perceptions and Attitudes toward the ASEAN Community," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 30, no. 1 (2011): 39, accessed May 25, 2014, http://www.academia.edu/4091856/Indonesian_Perceptions_and_Attitudes_toward_the_ASEAN_Community.

[42] Rodolfo C. Severino, *Southeast Asia in Search of an ASEAN Community: Insights from the Former ASEAN Secretary General* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), 27-32.

[43] Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power*, 159.

[44] Vientiane Times, "Lao Membership of ASEAN Bears Fruit, Prime Minister says," last updated August 8, 2012, accessed May 26, 2014, http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/Video_FileVDO/Aug12_Lao_mem.htm.

implemented foreign policies of peace, independence, friendship, and cooperation aimed at actively contributing to ASEAN's cooperation activities, and gaining the benefits of membership. As the smallest economy in ASEAN and one of the least developed countries in the world,[45] Laos faces resource constraints in taking part in security cooperation in the region. However, Laos is gaining confidence after successfully hosting and chairing the tenth ASEAN Air Chiefs Conference in 2013, and is currently co-chairing ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR from 2014 to 2016. Laos is ready to partake in regional efforts to tackle common issues facing the region based on its capability.[46] Laos has no seacoast, but shares land borders with China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Laos confronts multiple security problems ranging from epidemics, transnational crimes, natural disasters, to terrorism and "unexploded ordnances from the war," problems commonly shared among many ASEAN members.[47] Although its small economy, poverty, and remoteness from maritime hotspots in the South China Sea constrain its ability to contribute to ASEAN's multilateral security cooperation practices, Laos remains committed to building the ASEAN security community

Malaysia, as one of founding fathers of ASEAN, has played an active and supportive role in ASEAN. Malaysian leaders have stressed the vital role that ASEAN has played as well as benefits Malaysia has gained as a member of the organization: "The peace, prosperity, and stability that Malaysia enjoys today are, to a large extent, due to

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[45] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 27.

[46] Ibid.

[47] U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Laos," January 31, 2014, accessed May 26, 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2770.htm.

ASEAN's role as an organization that fosters trust and confidence amongst its member states."[48] Therefore, in Malaysia's foreign policy, regional cooperation, peace, and stability have been always its preoccupation. Thus, Malaysia attaches high priority to its relationship with ASEAN partners. Throughout its membership of ASEAN, Malaysia's contributions to the regional and international security and stability are significant. Malaysia has participated in more than twenty-two peacekeeping missions, and recently played a leading role in the conflict prevention and mediation in Mindanao, the Philippines. For the period of 2010-2013, Malaysia and Australia, co-chaired ADMM plus EWG on maritime security, and conducted the first-ever Maritime Security Table Top Exercise. Moreover, Malaysia is responsible for ensuring that the Strait of Malacca remains safe and secure for international navigation through joint patrols with Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand.[49] Due to Malaysia's relatively widespread geographic location, sharing porous land borders with Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and sea borders with the Philippines and Vietnam, there are trans-border issues of serious concern to Malaysia. Addressing transnational crimes, illegal migrant workers, and overlapping territorial claims are the main security issues emphasized by Malaysia. Piracy and terrorism acts occur in Malaysia's territory, but Malaysian authorities do not view these as major problems.[50] In a word, in order to safeguard its national interests and maintain its stability

[48] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, "ASEAN as the Cornerstone of Malaysia's Foreign Policy," accessed May 27, 2014, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/asean.

[49] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 29-32.

[50] Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 142-146.

as well as cope with transnational security issues, Malaysia seeks greater regional cooperation through its role in ASEAN.

Myanmar, which is characterized by its domestic unrest, military-ruled regime, and its porous borders with Bangladesh, India, China, Laos, and Thailand, is viewed to some extent as a nuisance rather than a contributor to the ASEAN security agenda. The brutal crackdown on peaceful protestors in 2007,[51] the poor response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008,[52] and the uncontrollable circulation of opium and synthetic drugs[53] into neighboring countries highlight the problems facing not only Myanmar, but also ASEAN in general. Many ASEAN members articulated their frustration over Myanmar's inaction and inability to solve its internal instability. In the past, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have voiced their concerns that Myanmar had become an embarrassment to ASEAN, and was a source of regional instability.[54] From ASEAN's perspective, constructive engagement[55] with Myanmar, rather than isolation, has been attempted to encourage and help Myanmar to improve its domestic stability, and be openly cooperative with the Association. In response, Myanmar has proved to be a responsible member of ASEAN by meeting membership obligations with its ongoing

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[51] Donald K. Emmerson, eds., *Hard Choices: Security, Democracy, and Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Reseach Center, 2008), 154.

[52] Ibid., 175.

[53] Ibid., 153.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 152.

domestic reforms.[56] It is worth noting that Myanmar's military leaders allowed a relief team from ASEAN countries to assist Cyclone Nargis victims, and likewise permitted the ASEAN Secretariats to assess losses in storm-struck areas. Conversely, they denied similar access to most relief teams from the West.[57] Recently Myanmar has embarked on holistic reforms, making it possible for it to play a more active role in regional and international security architecture.[58] Significantly, for the first time in its seventeen-year membership, Myanmar is chairing and hosting the 2014 ASEAN Summit. This new development promises a more open and cooperative Myanmar in ASEAN's joint efforts to cope with security issues of common concern.

The Philippines, the second largest archipelagic state in Southeast Asia, faces many security challenges. As a "typhoon-torn" country, it will benefit from a stronger defense cooperation with ASEAN. The Philippines' foreign policy cultivates constructive relations with its Asian neighbors,[59] with a special emphasis on ASEAN members. Due to its fragile geographic location, the Philippines are vulnerable to natural disasters, maritime insecurity, terrorism, and territorial contests. The two issues of greatest concern are natural calamities and extremist movements. No other nation on earth is affected by tropical typhoons as often as the Philippines, which the averages five to ten storms per

[56] Ibid., 178.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014, Myanmar, "2014 Chairmanship," ASEAN Summit 2014, accessed May 12, 2014, http://asean2014.gov.mm/2014-chairmanship.

[59] Global Security, "Philippines Foreign Relations," last modified August 19, 2014, accessed August 27, 2014, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/philippines/forrel.htm.

year.[60] The domestic terrorist threat from the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), rogue elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)[61] remains a source of instability. These pressing security issues compel the Philippines to seek a more robust collaboration with ASEAN. So far, the Philippines contribute more than its fair share to regional and international security ties. The Philippines ranks third in Southeast Asia and thirtieth overall in terms of contributing personnel to UN peacekeeping operations.[62] Furthermore, the Philippines actively participate in multilateral and bilateral efforts to enhance disaster preparedness, counter terrorism, and combating piracy and transnational crimes. Because it faces a complex security environment and various threats, the Philippines desire more multilateral security cooperation practices in Southeast Asia.

Singapore has long had a broad, comprehensive, perspective on security matters, not only domestically, but also regionally. A city-state as well as an epicenter of global trade, Singapore views all threats as trans-boundary and intertwined.[63] The primary security problems Singapore is confronting are infectious pandemics, terrorism, and maritime piracy. Due to its highly capable governance, the Singapore government is confident that most transnational challenges facing the region are manageable. Singapore

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[60] Christopher C. Burt, "Weather Underground: Philippines Typhoon History," November 8, 2014, accessed May 27, 2014, http://www.wunderground.com/blog/weatherhistorian/philippines-typhoon-history.

[61] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 40.

[62] Ibid., 42.

[63] Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 147.

strongly supports a U.S. presence in the region to cope with international security concerns like counterterrorism and piracy.[64] With its strategic location, economic capability, and flexible foreign policy, Singapore remains a key player in the ASEAN security environment.

In despite the fact that Thailand has been a main stakeholder on the Southeast Asia security stage, its current political turmoil bars greater contributions to regional security ties. Being considered as an economic tiger in Asia, Thailand is a major hub for commerce and transport, signifying its strategic importance for the Southeast Asia region as a whole.[65] The development and stability of Thailand will, in part, correlate with strengthened security cooperation in ASEAN. Thailand's close ties with both the U.S. and China serve as a bridge to promote their participation with the Association.[66] Since the birth of ASEAN, Thailand has proved to be a prominent actor in contributing to cooperation and prosperity of Southeast Asia, and fulfilling its role under ASEAN frameworks. Noticeable contributions of Thailand to the regional and international security include its co-chairmanship with South Korea of the 2013 ARF Disaster Relief Exercise; its active participation in peacekeeping missions; its role in establishing the ASEAN peacekeeping center network in 2012; its involvement in Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols; and its hosting of Cobra Gold multinational military exercises, to

[64] Ibid.

[65] Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 36.

[66] Rebul Mishra, *The US Rebalancing Strategy: Responses from Southeast Asia* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis New Delhi), 157-158.

name a few.[67]Notwithstanding, the country, susceptible to coups, is difficult to implement consistent policies in relation with ASEAN. Since 1932, Thailand has experienced eleven successful and seven attempted coups , making it the world record in the contemporary history.[68] Moreover, when Thailand chaired and hosted the2009 ASEAN Summit, four postponements tarnished its reputation in the region because of domestic chaos.[69] Transnational security matters primarily concerning Thailand consist of health insecurity, trafficking in humans and narcotics, extremism in the southern country. Summarily, the internal instability characterized by habitual coups, constant civil demonstrations, increased insurgency in the South, and a seriously divided society deprive much of Thailand's attention to intensify its security cooperation with ASEAN.

Arising from two widely known wars, Vietnam has flexibly taken part in regional and global integration processes. Vietnam consistently implements a foreign policy of openness, diversification, and multi-lateralization of international relations. Vietnam is a friend and reliable partner of all countries in the international community, actively taking part in international and regional cooperation processes.[70] To this goal, Vietnam has been a proactive and responsible member in ASEAN. Similar to the other nations in Southeast

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[67] ASEAN Security Outlook 2013, 47-49.

[68] Max Fisher, "Thailand has had more Coups than any other Country. This is Why," *The Washington Post*, accessed 26 May 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/12/03/thailand-has-had-more-coups-than-any-other-country-this-is-why/.

[69] Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 36.

[70] Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United State of America, "Foreign Policy," accessed May 12, 2014, http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/vietnam/foreign-policy.

Asia, transnational security challenges are not absent from Vietnam. Lingering post-war consequences such as vast areas contaminated by unexploded mines and Agent Orange, a long coastline, extended borders with China, Cambodia, and Laos, and the extreme weather patterns of a tropical climate all add layers to the security complexity confronting Vietnam. Security problems concerning Vietnam include natural disasters, infectious pandemics, human and drug trafficking, maritime insecurity, terrorism,[71] and disputes over territory. Perceiving that no single national solution can be effective in confronting those threats, Vietnam has intensified its commitments to ASEAN-centric cooperation frameworks. Vietnam chaired ASEAN in 2010, and successfully hosted the first ADMM-Plus in 2010, and the second ADMM Plus Experts' Working Groups on HADR meeting in 2012. "Vietnam is committed to fully participate in and actively contribute to the regional dialogue and cooperation on defense and security areas."[72]

Overall, the perceptions of security interests of ASEAN's countries do share important commonalities. Though having national interests, no member country views the others as an external threat, or seeks a policy of allying with big powers against other members. Nor do any nations pursue aggressive, extreme, or isolationistic foreign policies. Moreover, ASEAN members understand that security issues facing them are present and transnational in nature; hence, better solved with multinational efforts. They all see the benefits of having stronger regional security cooperation in areas of mutual

[71] Fouse, *Issues for Engagement*, 167.

[72] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Security Outlook," 51.

consent. Necessarily, areas of such cooperation must be determined through an understanding of the common security issues that Southeast Asia is confronting.

## Multifaceted Security Challenges in Southeast Asia

Professor Sheldon W. Simon, in his book, *ASEAN and its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges*, states that the prime motivation for ASEAN to move beyond simple sovereignty protection is the need to confront transnational challenges, which require international military cooperation.[73] The type of security and defense challenges, which Southeast Asia is facing, are complex, borderless, diverse, and imminent in nature, ranging from natural disasters, maritime insecurity, and the outbreak of pandemics to terrorism. Amitav Acharya points out in his book, "Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia," that the following features characterize new transnational dangers confronting ASEAN: First, they arise suddenly and unexpectedly; second, they respect no national boundaries; third, there are no adequate national responses to such problems; last, they present themselves with increasing intensity.[74]

Most natural disasters striking ASEAN derive from its unique geographic location and from the sea. Three-fourths of the Southeast Asia region is encircled by water, making the ASEAN member countries very vulnerable to nature-induced disasters. Tropical cyclones, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanos are among the most significant natural calamities that devastate the region. According to some researchers,

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[73] Sheldon W. Simon, *ASEAN and Its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges* (Carlisle, PA: U.S Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), iii.

[74] Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2009), 242-243.

there has been an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms affecting the Southeast Asia region. The 2013 Super Storm Haiyan was the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall anywhere in the world. It claimed the lives of more than 6,200 people, displaced more than four million and devastated at least a million homes in the Philippines. The Philippine government estimated that economic damages caused by the typhoon could exceed U.S. $12 billion.[75] Although, the countries the Southeast Asia region have become accustomed to fearsome storms, the damage they inflict is significant.

Relying on seaborne trade to fuel their economic growth, maritime security is certainly a matter of common interest of the ASEAN member states. Sitting at the crossroad of the Pacific and Indian Oceans makes the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea one of the busiest and the most strategically important sea-lanes of communications in the world. These waterways are essential to the economic survival of ASEAN members, and, therefore, are a source of ASEAN maritime insecurity.

Southeast Asia has the world's second busiest sea-lane running "over half of the world's merchant fleet (by tonnage) sails through the South China Sea every year."[76] The volume of seaborne trade with United States alone is impressive. "The sea lines of communication that crisscross the South China Sea carry $5.3 trillion in bilateral annual

[75] Cris Larano, "UN Says Slow Pace of Rebuilding 'Natural' after Disaster," *Wall Street Journal*, February 21, 2014, accessed May 5, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/searealtime/2014/02/21/un-says-slow-pace-of-rebuilding-natural-after-disaster/?KEYWORDS=haiyan+cyclone.

[76] Global Security, "South China Sea/Spratly Islands," accessed June 6, 2013, http://www. globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/spratly.htm.

trade, of which $1.2 trillion is U.S. trade."[77] Waterways in the Southeast Asia region are a target for piracy and for potential terrorist attacks, particularly the Malacca Strait. The title on *National Geographic Magazine*, "The Strait of Malacca, Dark Passage: Pirates Haunt It. Sailors Fear It. Global Trade Depends on It,"[78] illuminates the importance of maritime security in Southeast Asia's sea-lanes at large and the Strait of Malacca in particular.

The risk of widespread pandemics coupled with a tropical climate, inadequate healthcare facilities, and relatively low living standards as well as the high frequency of other natural disaster events pose a real, ongoing threat to lives, infrastructure, and national economies in the Southeast Asia Region. The World Health Organization (WHO) has voiced its serious concerns over the Asia-Pacific region as a potential epicenter of emerging diseases.[79] Amitav Acharya, in his book, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, ranked the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) the most hazardous threat to have ever confronted ASEAN. With a mortality rate of approximately ten percent, the SARS epidemic affected ASEAN, China, Hong Kong, and

[77] White House, "Press Briefing by NSA for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes and Admiral Robert Willard, U.S. Pacific Command," November 13, 2011, accessed June 6, 2013, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/13/press-briefing-nsa-strategic-communications-ben-rhodes-and-admiral-rober.

[78] Peter Gwin, "Dangerous Straits," *National Geographic*, October 2007, accessed May 2, 2014, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/10/malacca-strait-pirates/pirates-text/1.

[79] Richard Coker and Sandra Mounier-Jack, "Pandemic Influenza Preparedness in the Asia–Pacific Region," *The Lancet* 368 (September 2006): 886-889, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.apeiresearch.net/document_file/document_20070719011040-1.pdf.

Taiwan.[80] Singapore was the hardest nation hit within ASEAN, confirming more than two hundred cases of contagion and reporting over one thousand people in quarantine at the crisis peak. The loss to the national economy was estimated at $1.5 billion in 2003 because of a plunge in tourist arrivals alone.[81] Moreover, the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), caused by the H5N1 virus, spread fear across Southeast Asia because of the risk mutation which allowed it to transmit from one person to another. Globally, one hundred and nine people have died of this disease; sixty-six of these in ASEAN member countries.[82] It is clear that communicable pandemics continue to pose a danger to the region in terms of damage to national economies and loss of lives.

Terrorism, too, is a chronic problem that threatens security in ASEAN. There are concerns that future plans for a visa-free travelling region could allow terrorists from "existing internal conflicts in Indonesia, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines"[83] to spill over into other member countries. *ASEAN and its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges,* and *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia,* authored by Sheldon W. Simon and Amitav Acharya respectively, address terrorist activities present in the Southeast Asia region that include the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network, the global terrorist network, Al-Qaeda, and the insurgency carried out by the

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[80] Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 249-250.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Respond to Combat Avian Influenza," ASEAN Secretariat, April 2006, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/item/asean-response-to-combat-avian-influenza-by-asean-secretariat.

[83] Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia,* 243.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the southern Philippines.[84] The Bali bombings on October 2002, followed by another one year later, killed over two hundred people. This was the deadliest terrorist attack in the region's history,[85] and brought terrorism to the forefront of ASEAN's security concerns.[86] At the time, JI, the primary regional extremist web in Southeast Asia, was described as having a transnational organizational structure with cells entrenched in Singapore and Malaysia; Indonesia, Sabah, Sulawesi, and the southern Philippines; and the northern part of Australia. The JI developed its closest relationship with Al-Qaeda terrorists.[87] Furthermore, Thailand and Myanmar are also not immune from terrorist operations. Of all, the security threats facing ASEAN that call for regional collaboration, destroying trans-boundary terrorist cells is probably the gravest.

## ASEAN Defense Expenditures and Capabilities as a Whole –Emerging Trends

Rapid economic growth during recent decades has allowed the members of ASEAN to increase military spending. Based on statistics of the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (*SPIRI*), all the countries in the Southeast Asia region have witnessed notable increases in their defense spending in the last two decades, except for Brunei, which had a slight decrease in 2000 before turning upward in 2010. ASEAN's

[84] Ibid.

[85] Simon, *ASEAN and its Security Offspring*, 3.

[86] Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 243.

[87] Ibid., 244.

military expenditures combined, totaled US $33.7 billion in 2012.[88] Since 2010, real defense spending in Southeast Asia has maintained an average growth of six percent yearly, reaching US $38.7 billion in 2013.[89] A portion is allocated to expanding security cooperation in the region. However, although the increase in defense spending is matched by an increase in the frequency of ASEAN multinational military exercises, actual implementation of military cooperation is still in question. Still, an increased number of exercises can be viewed as a reflection of a greater willingness on the part of ASEAN's members to intensify military cooperation.

[88] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "Military Expenditure," accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2013/03.

[89] "Chapter Six: Asia," *The Military Balance*, 114, no. 1 (February 5, 2014): 204, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/04597222.2014.871879?queryID=%24%7 BresultBean.queryID%7D#.U_5SlE8cTIV.

Table 1. Defense Spending by ASEAN Member States in Constant (2009) US $M

| **Country/Year** | **1990** | **2000** | **2010** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brunei | 368 | 304 | 327 |
| Cambodia | 77 | 121 | 191 (2009) |
| Indonesia | 1,829 | 2,025 (2001) | 6,009 |
| Laos | N.A. | 24.6 | 18.4 (2009) |
| Malaysia | 1,495 | 2,020 | 3,259 |
| Myanmar | | | * |
| Philippines | 1,060 | 1,215 | 1,486 |
| Singapore | 3,038 | 5,855 | 7,651 |
| Thailand | 3,304 | 2,638 | 4,336 |
| Vietnam | 1,565 | N.A. | 2,410 |

*Note: Due to unavailable constant dollar figures, Myanmar defense spending is measured in terms of its local currency (Kyat) current figures. Myanmar's defense budget was 5.4 billon Kyat for 1990 and 63.45 billion Kyat for 2000. SIPRI does not provide data for 2010.

*Source:* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," accessed April 30, 2014, http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4.

In order to analyze the prospects for expanding ASEAN defense ties in the wake of alarming transnational security complications, it is useful to examine the military capabilities of ASEAN in terms of personnel, number of ships and aircraft. Much of the existing military infrastructure may be utilized in a joint response to regional security challenges. "Chapter Six: Asia" in *The Military Balance*, Volume 114, Issue 1, 2014 provides the most updated the military capabilities of ASEAN's member countries. As a whole, ASEAN possesses impressive defense manpower and resources. Notably, ASEAN has gained much of its positive international reputation because no member state views another member state as its enemy. Military cooperation is not geared toward any group of members or targeted at any outsiders. Defense cooperation remains a potential way to tackle security challenges because it is not yet fully developed. Provided there is political will from ASEAN leaders, a significant portion of those capabilities could be mobilized

for that purpose. The absence of intra-member conflicts among the member nations and the need to confront transnational security challenges provide ASEAN leaders a political opportunity to integrate military personnel and assets to tackle collectively these important issues of common concern.

Table 2. ASEAN Combined Military Capabilities

| **Country** | **Strength** | | **Number of ships (all types)** | **Number of airplanes (all types)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Active** | **Paramilitary** | | |
| Brunei | 7,000 | 2,250 | 21 | 46 |
| Cambodia | 124,300 | 67,000 | 16 | 25 |
| Indonesia | 395,500 | 281,000 | 409 | 437 |
| Laos | 29,100 | 100,100 | 56 | 50 |
| Malaysia | 109,000 | 24,600 | 349 | 246 |
| Myanmar | 406,000 | 107,250 | 153 | 248 |
| Philippines | 125,000 | 40,500 | 191 | 148 |
| Singapore | 72,500 | 75,100 | 190 | 299 |
| Thailand | 360,850 | 92,700 | 275 | 787? |
| Vietnam | 482,000 | 40,000 | 190 | 244 |
| Total | 2,111,250 | 830,500 | 1,850 | 3,530 |

*Source*: "Chapter Six: Asia," *The Military Balance*, 114, no. 1 (February 5, 2014): 201-296, accessed April 30, 2014, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/04597222.2014.871879?queryID=%24%7BresultBean.queryID%7D#.U_5SlE8cTIV.

## Key Schools of Thoughts

### ASEAN Military Cooperation Trends and Prospects

Amitav Acharya, a professor at American University for many years, took an early interest in examining main defense collaborative trends in Southeast Asia. In an article published in 1990, titled "A Survey of Military Cooperation among the ASEAN States: Bilateralism or Alliance" he highlighted the historical prevalence of bilateral military ties in ASEAN over multilateralism. He described bilateral defense cooperative practices in the association as a "defense spider web," an integral part of the ASEAN political community[90] and a principal mode of security collaboration within ASEAN.[91] Acharya also stressed an inward looking concept of security in intra-ASEAN relations. The concept primarily focused on domestic development and stability as the driver to regional peace and security. He reiterated the undesirability and futility of forming a military alliance by saying that ASEAN lacks a unified external threat,[92] and its security concerns are mainly intrastate menaces.

Acharya also supported intra-ASEAN bilateral military links while objecting to a multilateral military pact in another article "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: 'Security Community' or 'Defense Community'?" published in 1991. In this article, the author argued that military bilateral ties within ASEAN were a flexible, advantageous,

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[90] Amitav Acharya, "A Survey of Military Cooperation among ASEAN States: Bilateralism or Alliance?" Centre for International and Strategic Studies, May 12, 1990, 1, accessed June 1, 2014, http://yciss.info.yorku.ca/files/ 2012/06/OP14-Acharya.pdf.

[91] Ibid., 8.

[92] Ibid., 25.

and effective way of addressing the member countries' inward-looking view of security, concentrated on the threats of insurgency, subversion, ethnic separation, and political dissent.[93] On the other hand, an alliance was deemed unnecessary, unimportant, and even counterproductive to those problems.[94] He went further by asserting that ASEAN had actually evolved into a security community in the sense that its members all ruled out the use of force and strived to resolve disputes and differences through habitual cooperation and peaceful means. Moreover, the writer emphasized that there was no external threat dangerous enough to force ASEAN into a defense community. Therefore, an ASEAN's "defense community would be unpractical and meaningless,"[95] the author affirms.

Acharya described the essence of military-security collaborations in Southeast Asia in his article "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN," published in 1992. The author insisted, "ASEAN has not formally promoted military-security cooperation among its members on a regional basis. . . . There is no formal approach to collective security within ASEAN regionalist framework." [96] He argued that ASEAN was not inclined to institutionalize or formalize security cooperative mechanisms on a regional

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[93] Amitav Acharya, "'Security Community' or 'Defense Community'?" *Pacific Affairs* 64, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 163, accessed May 26, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2759957.

[94] Ibid., 161.

[95] Ibid., 177.

[96] Amitav Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN" (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), *Journal of Peace Research* 29, no. 1 (1992): 10, accessed May 25, 2014, http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/29/1/7.abstract.

framework.[97] Instead of forming a military pact, ASEAN member countries favor bilateralism over multilateralism in addressing security issues. He pointed out that the member states of ASEAN did not advocate the idea of a military pact or multilateral defense cooperation in any form. Instead, ASEAN's policy-makers had welcomed and historically preferred bilateral military ties outside the ASEAN framework.[98] Overall, the author's analysis focused on the irrelevance and ineffectiveness of creating an alliance based on the assumption that threat perceptions of ASEAN regimes were inward looking. He concluded by confidently stating, "ASEAN states have thus far viewed their bilateral arrangements as an appropriate and adequate response to the kind of security threats they have faced in the past and are likely to face in the future."[99]

Acharya studied the sphere of military collaboration within ASEAN by analyzing both the benefits to be gained and the barriers to be overcome. According to the writer, proliferating military exercises inside ASEAN would help build trust and confidence among participating countries, dispel mutual suspicions, and most importantly, reduce the likelihood of an intra-member conflict. He explained that bilateral military exercises were useful to foster a cooperative and familiar atmosphere, promote openness and trust, and build cohesiveness among nations.[100] Furthermore, bilateral exercises could "develop

[97] Ibid., 17.

[98] Ibid., 12.

[99] Acharya, "Bilateralism or Alliance," 29.

[100] Ibid., 19.

common operating procedures and tactics, standardized modes of command and control, and enhance inter-operability between armed forces of the ASEAN states."[101]

Similarly, Severino points out the fundamental values of regional security cooperation in his book, *Southeast Asia in Search of an ASEAN Community: Insights from the Former ASEAN Secretary-General*. According to the author, cooperation for security purposes fosters "mutual understanding, build[s] confidence, dissipate[s] suspicions, and provide[s], not a mechanism, but a setting for the peaceful management of disputes."[102] Severino affirms that ASEAN's solidarity and joint efforts in terms of security cooperation have furthered its security interests far more effectively than the capabilities of individual states. Moreover, the culture of not resorting to force and habitual security ties within ASEAN have proven their greatest worth in helping defuse, manage, and contain tensions and disputes in the region which otherwise would escalate.

However, military cooperation in ASEAN is likely to face several obstacles. Lack of inter-operability and integration, differences in doctrine and language as well as variations in training procedures and logistics systems[103] impede the strengthening of ASEAN's security ties. Some other major constraints encumbering integration and collaborations of ASEAN's armed forces include differences in weapon and equipment systems,[104] lack of political will owing to differing threat perceptions, and limited

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[101] Acharya, "Security Community or Defense Community," 167.

[102] Severino, *Southeast Asia in Search of an ASEAN Community*, 207-208.

[103] Acharya, "Security Community or Defense Community," 168.

[104] Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World," 15.

indigenous resources.[105] Acharya was also concerned about the degree of mistrust among some ASEAN countries, which partly fueled an arms race in the region.[106]

However, "A New Arms Race? Explaining Recent Southeast Asian Military Acquisitions," authored by Richard A. Bitzinger, argues that the current process of arms acquisitions in Southeast Asia hardly fits the concept of an arms race.[107] According to the author, an arms race has to meet the necessary criteria: mutual adversarial relationship, explicit tit-for-tat arms acquisitions, the intention of seeking dominance over one's rivals through arming and intimidation. He further explains that there is no mutually adversarial relationship among the Southeast Asian countries, nor is any nation seeking to dominate or intimidate another state through its military buildup. In fact, all the countries in the region profess their harmonious neighborliness and willingness to resolve disputes and differences by peaceful means. Additionally, he stresses that recent arms procurements by states in the region are part of a normal rearmament cycle, replacing obsolete equipment and weapons in their arsenals.[108] Overall, Southeast Asia prefers military cooperation to competition, and it has little desire for an arms race.

Shaun Narine, in "ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security," identifies obstacles that may hinder ASEAN's ability to manage regional security in Southeast

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[105] Ibid., 18.

[106] Ibid., 12.

[107] Richard A. Bitzinger, "A New Arms Race? Explaining Recent Southeast Asian Military Acquisition," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 32, no. 1 (April 2010): 50, accessed May 28, 2014, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/csa/summary/v032/32.1.bitzinger.html.

[108] Ibid., 60-62.

Asia. He views divergent security perceptions and national self-interests among ASEAN's members as a main limitation to intra-organizational cooperation. Perceiving China as either a threat or a partner remains a source of division within ASEAN.[109] Narine questions the existence of a sense of regional interest, because the ASEAN member states remain motivated by narrow understandings of their self-interests. This undermines ASEAN's unity and its ability to operate effectively. The author suggests that in order for the association to manage regional security productively, each member must make a firm commitment to transcend narrow self-interest.[110]

## Patterns of ASEAN Military Collaborations

Scholars interested in Southeast Asia identify major forms of defense cooperation in the region, including border security arrangements, intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, military education, and training; but these same scholars have seemed unable to envision a formal multilateral ASEAN defense cooperative framework and multilateral military exercises. Acharya takes the lead in identifying key military collaborative patterns among the Southeast Asian countries in his three early-1990s articles referred to on previous page. Acharya's foremost finding is the sheer proliferation of bilateral military links among the member states.[111]

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[109] Shaun Narine, "ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security," *Pacific Affairs* 71, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 199, 211, accessed June 16, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2760976?uid= 3739672&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104575811927.

[110] Ibid., 195, 214.

[111] Acharya, "Bilateralism or Alliance," 1.

Early bilateral ties that took shape between ASEAN states dealt with border security cooperation. They were between Thailand and Malaysia, Malaysia and Indonesia, the Philippines and Indonesia, and Malaysia and the Philippines.[112] Thailand and Malaysia were even willing to compromise their sovereignty by allowing border crossings in "hot pursuit" to fight insurgents on the Thai-Malaysia border.[113]

Another form of security collaboration among ASEAN states has been intelligence sharing and exchange. Those exchanges were multilateral as well as bilateral and involved both military as well as national intelligence agencies.[114] The only known form of multilateral military-security cooperation within ASEAN before the founding of ADMM and ADMM-Plus was intelligence exchanges. This cooperation involved annual meetings of the intelligence agencies of all the ASEAN countries. Bilateral intelligence arrangements also exist between Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia, Indonesia and Thailand, and Singapore and Brunei.[115]

During ASEAN's early years, bilateral exercises involving land, air, and naval forces illustrated the defense spider web in ASEAN. According to a Japanese source, between May 1972 and the end of 1980, forty-five intra-ASEAN bilateral exercises took place. Of those, Indonesia participated in thirty-eight, followed by Malaysia (twenty-six),

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[112] Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World," 13.

[113] Acharya, "Bilateralism or Alliance," 1-3.

[114] Ibid., 14.

[115] Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World," 14.

Thailand (nine), Singapore (seven), and the Philippines (six).[116] Indonesia played a catalyst role for this interlocking web of bilateral exercises in ASEAN. The value of those exercises was that they built trust and confidence and increased interoperability through developing joint operational procedure and doctrines. This, in turn, facilitated a common response in times of crises.[117]

The most dynamic form of bilateral defense cooperation within ASEAN occurs in area of military training and education. Mutual participation in each other's officer education and training programs has become habitual military cooperation among the ASEAN armed forces.[118] The national military institutions of most ASEAN countries make their command and staff colleges available for training middle and senior officers from other members. Vietnam proactively takes part in those programs by sending a hundred officers to other ASEAN states while also inviting a similar number to its military institutions every year. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines have likewise developed regular exchanges with other ASEAN countries by providing education and training facilities at their command and staff colleges.[119] Such practices are beneficial to the ASEAN members as they promote confidence building through familiarization with each other's military doctrines and capabilities.

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[116] Acharya, "Bilateralism or Alliance," 17.

[117] Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World," 14.

[118] Acharya, "ASEAN 'Defense Community' or 'Security Community,'?" 168.

[119] Ibid.

Carlyle A. Thayer, in his article, "Southeast Asia: Patterns of Security Cooperation," describes four forms of defense ties that combine and compete to shape the region's strategic environment. Thayer categorizes Southeast Asia's defense cooperation into four patterns based upon participants and their purposes. The first pattern consists multilateral military cooperation between external powers and individual Southeast Asian countries, developed to meet specific security concerns. The second pattern centers on U.S.-led theatre security cooperation with its allies and partners in the region, designed to address both conventional and non-traditional challenges. The third pattern involves Chinese-led multilateral efforts to bind ASEAN to a structure of East Asian regional security cooperation to cope primarily with non-traditional security issues. The fourth pattern revolves around ASEAN-led efforts with the aim to strengthen security cooperation among its members and dialogue partners.[120] While the first three patterns highlight the exertion of external powers, mainly the United States and China competing to exert influence in Southeast Asia, the fourth stresses the proactive and central role of ASEAN to engage outside actors as well as to foster regional security.

Military cooperation in Southeast Asia has gradually evolved in a new direction of institutionalization and multi-lateralization. There was no formal multilateral defense cooperation and no multilateral exercises under ASEAN frameworks until the recent initiation of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus working groups. ADMM and ADMM-Plus, ASEAN's highest military cooperative mechanisms, prove their relevance in coping with

[120] Carlyle A. Thayer, "Southeast Asia: Patterns of Security Cooperation," Australian Strategic Policy Institute, September 30, 2010, 2, 13, 29, 30, accessed June 18, 2014, https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/southeast-asia-patterns-of-security-cooperation/Southeast_Asia_patterns_security.pdf.

transnational security challenges in the region. So far, under those frameworks, a number of large joint exercises have taken place, such as ADMM-Plus HADR/Military Medicine Exercise, ADMM-Plus Table-Top Exercise on Peacekeeping Operations, ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise, ADMM-Plus Counterterrorism Exercise, to name a few. The regularity of multinational exercises, and high-ranking military official meetings convened within ASEAN framework characterizes ASEAN's political resolve to intensify the defense cooperation process.

The inception of ADMM brought on a series of military-to-military interactions and activities, which had been conducted in the past outside the official ASEAN framework under its umbrella.[121] They include the ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces Meeting, ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting, ASEAN Navy Interaction (ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting), ASEAN Air Force Chiefs Conference, ASEAN Military Intelligence Meeting, and the ASEAN Armies Rifle Meet.[122] Furthermore, ADMM continues to expand cooperation by convening its other subordinate meetings: ASEAN Military Operational Informal Meeting, ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medicine Meeting, and ASEAN Sergeant Major Annual Meeting.[123] ASEAN's defense cooperation

[121] Thayer, "Southeast Asia: Patterns of Security Cooperation," 25.

[122] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "Concept Paper for the Establishment of an ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting," ASEAN Secretariat, accessed June 19, 2014, http://www.asean.org/news/item/concept-paper-for-the-establishment-of-an-asean-defense-ministers-meeting-2.

[123] Ministry of Defense, Brunei Darussalam, "Myanmar Hosts 11th ASEAN Chief of Defense Forces Informal Meeting," March 5, 2014, accessed June 19, 2014, http://www2.mindef.gov.bn/MOD2/index.php/news-archives-mainmenu-70/2265-myanmar-hosts-11th-asean-chief-of-defense-forces-informal-meeting.

is shifting from bilateralism to multilateralism and from inward-looking to outward-looking perspectives. These changes are due to each member's changing perceptions of threats and the dissipation of the clouds of suspicion that had often existed between ASEAN's member states. Inclusively, ASEAN has developed a multilevel, multilateral, and multifaceted defense cooperation that positively contributes to the regional cohesiveness, stability, and security.

Although, ASEAN's defense collaborative practices have clearly yielded positive benefits to date, there is much greater potential for its militaries to respond to disastrous events. Military cooperative ties in the region should be expanded to include not only multilateral exercises but also the employment of troops in the event of crises. According to some observers, after the Haiyan typhoon devastated the Philippines, all the members of ASEAN assisted it with financial and food aid, but minimal military personnel were sent to help on the ground. Since, problems of this type occur frequently and may exceed a member country's capability, it seems reasonable that ASEAN's strong capacity for military cooperation and coordination should be used to mitigate the consequences.

Samuel Sharpe investigates what he calls the *ASEAN way* in his article "An ASEAN Way to Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia." He sees ASEAN focused on two norms, namely non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states and no use of force.[124] He questions the true strength of ASEAN's security identity because of how it responded to several past events. However, he fails to appreciate that ASEAN member

[124] Samuel Sharpe, "An ASEAN Way to Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia," *The Pacific Review* 16, no. 2 (2003): 231, accessed June 20, 2014, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0951274032000069624?src=recsys#.UxtF4j9dWhs.

states today recognize the urgency of nontraditional threats and are more willing to cooperate in collective defense.

In "ASEAN and its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges," Sheldon W. Simon applauds the role that ASEAN has played upon the world political stage.[125] The author, however, criticizes ASEAN's principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of the other members as an impediment in addressing security issues. He also argues that bilateral military exercises are counterproductive in creating a multilateral response to transnational challenges, which are the main impetuses for ASEAN changing its founding principle of protecting the sovereignty of member states.[126] Most Southeast Asians believe that their security is better assured, not by isolating themselves, but rather by proactively engaging big powers like China, the United States, and Russia in multilateral efforts. Simon is pessimistic over the prospect for security regionalism in Southeast Asia. "On the multilateral dimension, little has been accomplished because neither ASEAN nor the ARF [ASEAN Regional Forum] have been willing to tackle the core security affecting the region." Regional security is a weak reed, according to Simon. Contributing factors include the absence of interoperability among the region's militaries, lingering doubts their about neighbors' motivations, and unwillingness to establish effective arrangements to cope with transnational challenges.[127] Simon concludes by suggesting

[125] Simon, *ASEAN and its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges*, vii.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 30.

that security cooperation in Southeast Asia is still bilateral by default and that because of the lack of multinational efforts, this situation will probably not change.

The review of literature shows the following: first, that the establishment, expansion, development, and adaptation of ASEAN have all been closely linked to the main trends in modern international relations. Second, it describes how ASEAN emerged from colonial rule and the influence of big powers to become a stable and rapidly growing economic region, and is now seeking to build its own shared identity and actively engage with key actors on the world stage. ASEAN member states are doing their utmost to gradually dispel the clouds of suspicion and skepticism concerning joint military ties, to specify practical measures which would help strengthen mutual ties, to turn grand-sounding declarations into concrete actions, and to shape various trends into a convergent direction. Third, ASEAN is evolving from its historical spider web pattern of bilateral defense cooperation agreements lacking a center into one characterized by multilateral military ties guided through ADMM and ADMM-Plus mechanisms.

A common trend drawn from the literature review is that, over time, ASEAN member states are adopting a less skeptical view of multilateral defense cooperation. The tendency in ASEAN military cooperation has been a gradual shift from bilateralism to multilateralism, and from an inward looking to an outward-looking perspective. However, the possibilities for greater cooperation have also been identified. Although great progress has been achieved in creating military cooperation frameworks and mechanisms as well as in having conducted successful multinational exercises, ASEAN's military ties in security issues are nevertheless far below their potential. A major step toward improving this situation would be to constitute a military standing body at the

regional level to address and respond to the security challenges in a joint and constructive manner.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodologies and techniques applied throughout the thesis in order to answer the research questions. The questions posed are addressed based on an investigation of the literature and continue to be answered through a case-study approach.

After scrutinizing the context surrounding the birth of ASEAN and its defense cooperation, looking at how various analysts have interpreted the patterns of military cooperation in the region, the thesis assesses the current state of security cooperation in ASEAN through two case studies. These case studies serve as a basis for assessing the effectiveness and shortcomings of the current mutual security architecture in ASEAN. An analysis of these cases is used to identify the impediments to the expansion of military ties and the tangible benefits of strengthening military coordination and cooperation. Based on the result of this analysis, this thesis will recommend the kinds of organizational structures ASEAN should consider if it wants to better integrate member state militaries in order to better address non-traditional security challenges.

The two case studies examined in this project are the international search for the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 and the joint Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP). These case studies offer insight into several current challenges in the arena of military to military cooperation. First, they are representative of the benefits and obstacles to deepening military to military cooperation ties in the region. Second, both cases fall in domains of defense cooperation that have already been implemented under the ASEAN framework: Search and Rescue, and Maritime Security. Third, these case studies are

timely because ASEAN member countries are currently in the process of intensifying their commitment to military cooperation. Last, they exemplify both effectiveness and ineffectiveness, success and failure, in the area of ASEAN military cooperation and collaboration.

The inexplicable disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 made headlines all over the world and drew lots of international attention. The hunt for the missing aircraft set a new record in terms of the number of participating countries and amount of resources that were mobilized. The incident brought many countries and militaries together to work side by side, some of which had never before attempted to cooperate at this level. The joint multinational searching effort proved that in a time of emergency, it is possible for countries to work closely together, sharing military and intelligence resources. However, as far as the search for the missing flight is concerned, defects in the military coordination have been identified. The ineffectiveness of the search also exposed the limited capacity of ASEAN in the area of search and rescue. This also raises the question of what effective role ASEAN should play when such incidents happen to one of its member countries.

The Malacca Strait Patrols are a typical instance of defense collaborations in Southeast Asia that has borne fruits. The Strait of Malacca became known as a hotspot of maritime insecurity when pirate activities became rampant and posed a great danger to freedom of navigation. In response to this threat, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and later on Thailand implemented joint patrols by both sea and air that have proved very effective. The numbers of reported pirate attacks have decreased remarkably, boosting confidence among the participating countries as a result. This case illustrates how

military cooperation can contribute to collective security within ASEAN if executed in a closely coordinated fashion.

These two case studies are analyzed in depth and evaluated using the following established criteria:

1. Political will: The stronger, the better
2. Mutual trust: The stronger, the better
3. Available resources: The more, the better
4. Coordination: The closer and more integrated, the better
5. Tangible result: The more, the better

Let us now examine the significance of each of these criteria. In terms of defense cooperation, especially in a multinational context, political will is foremost. Political will is demonstrated by the level of commitment given to implementing military cooperation. There is no multilateral military cooperation without political action from the participating parties. In other words, political commitment among ASEAN countries is the necessary condition for defense cooperative programs to exist. Political will is the most important factor influencing the effectiveness of multilateral military cooperation.

Military cooperation among a group of countries requires mutual trust in order to exist, develop, and achieve practical results. A shared trust in the good intentions of the other and a conviction that the objectives of such cooperation are worthwhile are the essential foundation for effective cooperation. ASEAN consists of ten countries with diverse political systems. Thus, mutual trust and transparency are of key importance for ASEAN to promote closer multilateral military ties.

Political will and mutual trust are vital, but are not enough; sufficient resources are also needed. Resources are an essential enabler for military effective military cooperation within ASEAN. Indeed, the future of defense collaboration in Southeast Asia depends very much on each member country's willingness to provide assets and personnel. Although they have enjoyed rapid economic growths, ASEAN remains a group of relatively poor countries, which faces resource constraints. To promote further military ties, the association must consider resource availability. The availability of resources will heavily influence the success of military cooperation in ASEAN.

Coordination and communication are a matter of utmost importance in the sphere of multinational military cooperation. The militaries of ASEAN member states must be able to coordinate closely with one another in order to work together effectively. Coordination becomes an increasingly imperative factor for an organization such as ASEAN whose member countries are physically dispersed, and whose weapons, equipment systems, doctrines, operating procedures, and languages differ. Effective coordination is clearly an essential aspect, and is important factor considered in both case studies.

Finally, the bottom line for assessing defense cooperation is to identify and evaluate the tangible results it generates. No matter how robust the political will and mutual trust, how many resources are allocated, and how close the coordination, if military cooperation fails to bring concrete outcomes, it is considered ineffective or a failure. Thus, the effectiveness of the two cases will be evaluated based upon the practical results they have produced.

Each criterion will be scored against a scale from –1, 0, to +1 that correspond to results of analyzing each case. –1, 0, and +1 represents poor, medium, and good, respectively. After analyzing and assessing the two case studies, and totaling the scores, a conclusion will be drawn for each case as to the level and quality of military cooperation and collaboration in ASEAN.

Table 3. Two Case Studies and Evaluation Criteria

| **Case Studies Criteria** | **Case Study 1 MH370 Search** | **Case Study 2 Malacca Strait Patrols** |
|---|---|---|
| Political Will | | |
| Mutual Trust | | |
| Available Resources | | |
| Coordination | | |
| Tangible Result | | |
| Totaling Scores | | |

*Source:* Created by author.

## Summary

This thesis applies a qualitative research methodology with an emphasis on the case study approach. The method described in this chapter is designed serve as a roadmap to analyze the two case studies for subsequent chapters. This research method and the information it extracts will provide insights into the levels of effectiveness in each of the two case studies. These insights will allow assessments of the benefits to be derived from closer ASEAN military cooperation as well as the obstacles to such cooperation.

# CHAPTER 4

# ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze and interpret data and information produced by using the methodology and the criteria described in Chapter 3 above in order to draw summaries and conclusions.

## The Hunt for the Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 and the Role of ASEAN

The mysterious disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 and the search for the missing aircraft attracted much international attention. Flight MH370 departed at 12:41 a.m., local time, March 8, 2014, from Kuala Lumpur for Beijing, carrying two hundred and twenty-seven passengers and twelve crewmembers. By 7:24 a.m. the same day, Malaysian Airlines publicly announced the plane's disappearance.[128] The aircraft vanished without leaving any trace. Since then, search efforts were carried out with the participation of many countries.

The seemingly endless search and rescue operation for Fight 370 has reportedly been the costliest and largest joint search effort in history with participation by twenty-six countries, involving sixty ships and fifty planes.[129] The hunt for the missing aircraft

[128] Michael Martinez, "Key Moments Emerge in Tracking of Missing Malaysia Airlines Plane," *CNN World*, March 23, 2014, assessed July 2, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/15/world/asia/malaysia-airlines-flight-370-chronology/.

[129] Seow Bei Yi, "MH370: Straits Times Web Special Highlights Sea and Air Assets Used in Hunt," *The Straits Times*, April 9, 2014, accessed May 8, 2014, http://www.straitstimes.com/news/singapore/more-singapore-stories/story/mh370-straits-times-web-special-highlights-sea-and-air-a.

brought the militaries of many countries together in a cooperative effort with a united goal. The massive scope and scale of the search seems to suggest that multilateral security cooperative endeavors in Southeast Asia may be bearing fruit. However, the international search operation exposed many flaws in the ability of ASEAN countries to conduct coordinated military search and rescue operations.

The participants in the hunt for the jetliner mostly mirror the members of ADMM-Plus where ASEAN holds the pivotal role. However, ASEAN, as an intergovernmental organization, was relegated to play the role of a bystander instead of a player in the search for the aircraft. ASEAN, in fact, could have played a much stronger role in organizing military coordination and cooperation in the hunt for Flight 370. Analyzing the MH370 disaster provides insights about factors that contribute to the success or failure, and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the search operation in particular, and military cooperative practices in ASEAN as whole.

## Analysis

### Political Will

The participating nations displayed a wide range of political commitment to joint search efforts for the missing plane. The fact that there were twenty-six countries partaking in the search operation shows that there was at least a measure of political will for multinational cooperation, but it also reveals that commitment of some was half-hearted. Malaysia, the host nation, showed a reluctant commitment to the search. Malaysia's initial lack of political will was reflected by its early denial, and later reluctance to disclose its military data and satellite signals. Instead of cooperating to trace the aircraft, Malaysia withheld vital information that its military had spotted the jet

deviating from the planned route for a week after the flight's disappearance.[130] Under increasing pressure, the Malaysian government later had to release sensitive information. Malaysia's unwillingness to share sensitive information, along with its ineffective role in attempting to coordinate multinational search efforts, brought the political commitment of the Malaysian government into question in the eyes of many observers.

As one hundred and fifty-two Chinese passengers were on board, China deployed a significant amount of assets.[131] However, China, too, was not fully committed to the search for the disappearing jet. "[The Chinese] won't share radar data," a Western official working in Beijing asserted.[132] Later, China surprisingly released satellite images showing what looked like debris in the South China Sea, but the effect of this release was to distract the search and rescue efforts by refocusing on areas that had already been scoured. According to some experts, China intentionally blurred the satellite pictures to hide its technological capabilities.[133] Moreover, China irresponsibly said that it issued the satellite photos by mistake.[134] This inconsistency and ambiguity in releasing its satellite data underline China's failures to contribute positively to the search.

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[130] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, "Search for MH370 Bares Mistrust between the 26 Nations, Say U.S. Daily," *The Malaysian Insider*, March 27, 2014, accessed June 26, 2014, http://www.the malaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/search-for-mh370-bares-mistrust-between-the-26-nations-says-us-daily.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, "Distrust Adding to Malaysian Jet Confusion, Say Analysts," *The Malaysian Insider*, March 13, 2014, accessed June 24,

On the other hand, Australia and Vietnam exhibited whole-hearted commitment to the hunt for the aircraft. Of the twenty-six nations involved in the search efforts, Australia was perhaps the most committed and responsible contributor. Its government repeatedly said it would "do all it can to solve the mystery of the airliner's disappearance. It has placed no time limit on how long the search will continue."[135] Australia demonstrated clear evidence of its political will by taking the lead in the search, and contributing enormous financial resources to the international search operation.

Vietnam too, made a swift response to the flight's disappearance by dispatching a significant number of ships and aircraft to the search. More notably, putting aside its territorial disputes, "Vietnam has allowed two Chinese electronic surveillance planes to overfly its airspace."[136] This clearly demonstrated its strong commitment to the search through a positive act of cooperation.

## Mutual Trust

Although the search involved unprecedented multilateral military cooperation, the hunt for the Malaysian ill-fated flight nevertheless was clouded by mutual suspicion, which constrained the effectiveness of international search efforts. Mutual distrust was

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2014, http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/distrust-adding-to-malaysian-jet-confusion-say-analysts.

[135] New York Daily News, "Malaysia, Australia in Talks over Bill for Flight 370 Search," June 13, 2014, accessed June 24, 2014, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/malaysia-australia-talks-bill-flight-370-search-article-1.1828632.

[136] Tania Branigan, "Malaysia Flight MH370 Hunt Sees Suspicion and Cooperation," *The Guardian*, March 14, 2014, accessed June 15, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/ mar/14/malaysia-flight-mh370-hunt-sees-suspicion-and-cooperation-china-us.

reflected in the reluctance of some countries to share sensitive information. It was also reflected by suspicion of each other's intentions. Malaysia was the foremost stakeholder. Yet instead of transparently sharing all the data it had in a timely manner, Malaysia seemed loathe to release information. Malaysia initially declined to release raw data from its military radars, deeming the information "too sensitive,"[137] "at high level," and "maybe it is still not the right time [to disclose the information] yet."[138] It was almost a week after the flight's disappearance before Malaysia shared raw radar data with U.S. investigators. Malaysia's procrastination and hesitation to release information added layers of confusion and suspicion among the search participants.

Doubts about the intentions of others and the fear of exposing their own defense capabilities helps explain why governments were reluctant to reveal their radar information. The reasoning was "the rate at which they can take the picture can also reveal how good the radar system is."[139] In fact, Thailand's military spotted MH370 in its airspace. However, it did not inform any Thai civil authorities for ten days, nor did it communicate that information to Malaysia, explaining that it was not requested.[140]

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Simon Denyer, "Contradictory Statements from Malaysia over Missing Airliner Perplex, Infuriate," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2014, accessed June 26, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/03/12/contradictory-statements-from-malaysia-over-missing-airliner-perplex-infuriate/.

[139] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, "Distrust Adding to Malaysian Jet Confusion, Say Analysts."

[140] Adrian Schofield, Jeremy Torr, and Bradley Perrett, "MH370 Search Coordination Lapses Echo Global Issues," *Aviation Week*, March 20, 2014, accessed June 25, 2014, http://aviationweek.com/commercial-aviation/mh370-search-coordination-lapses-echo-global-issues.

Similarly, Indonesia was not forthcoming in sharing its data even though the plane was believed to have crossed in its airspace. Indonesia also dragged its feet in granting permission for search and rescue aircraft to overfly its territory.[141] These actions underline the problem of mutual suspicions over neighboring countries' intentions in cross-border operations of this kind. Suspecting each other's intentions makes countries reluctant to share sensitive information they may have had about the flight.

Mutual trust, a prerequisite for successful cooperation, was largely absent in the joint international search operation for the missing Malaysian jetliner. This led to the some countries' reluctance to share data and half-hearted commitments to the search. The MH370 crisis points out that mutual trust remains an area where improvement is needed in the Southeast Asian region. In order for multinational military cooperation in ASEAN to progress, member countries must cast aside skepticism and suspicion, and work together in an open-minded and transparent fashion.

## Available Resources

One of the most notable aspects of the international search operation of the missing Malaysian jetliner MH370 is the unprecedented amount of resources poured into it. Indeed, the hunt for the flight has reportedly been the largest and most expensive multinational search effort in history.[142] At its height, twenty-six countries took part in

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[141] Ibid.

[142] Jonathan Pearlman, "MH370 Search Becomes Most Expensive Aviation Hunt in History, yet still no Clues," *The Telegraph*, May 9, 2014, accessed June 30, 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/malaysia/10863605/MH370-search-becomes-most-expensive-aviation-hunt-in-history-yet-still-no-clues.html.

the massive search, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, China, Indonesia, India, France, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Turkmenistan, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. The participating nations' contributions took the form of not only military assets on land, sea, and air, but also expertise and technical assistance in terms of providing and analyzing radar and satellite information.[143]

The number of air and sea assets deployed in the search for MH370 was staggering. At one point, almost sixty ships and fifty aircraft were utilized in the hunt for the ill-fated plane.[144] By March 13, five days after the airplane's disappearance, Malaysia deployed twenty-seven ships and eighteen aircraft; Vietnam dispatched twenty-two ships and fourteen aircraft; China mobilized nine naval ships and civil patrol vessels, and a number of planes; Singapore sent two warships and a submarine support and rescue vessel, a Sikorsky naval helicopter and a C-130 aircraft; the United States had dispatched two navy ships, a P-3C Orion aircraft; alongside with the deployments of other countries.[145] As the search area expanded, additional assets were committed to the search.

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[143] Global News, "Flight MH370: A Look at the 26 Nations Involved in Search for Missing Malaysian Airlines Jet," March 17, 2014, accessed July 4, 2014, http://globalnews.ca/news/1211929/flight-mh370-a-look-at-the-26-nations-involved-in-search-for-missing-malaysia-airlines-jet/.

[144] Yi, "MH370."

[145] John Lee Fevre, "Handling Flight MH370 Undermines 47 Years of ASEAN and AEC," *The Establishment Post*, March 13, 2014, accessed July 4, 2014, http://www.establish mentpost.com/HANDLING-FLIGHT-MH370-UNDERMINES-47-YEARS-ASEAN-AEC/.

The hunt for the Malaysian jetliner not only highlights its scope and scale, but also the tremendous expenses borne by the countries involved in the search.

In terms of costs, the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 was the costliest such operation in aviation history, amounting to about US $53 million.[146] The lion's share of the cost was incurred in deploying ships, airplanes, satellites, and submarines to search the South China Sea, the Malacca Straits, and then remote areas of the Indian Ocean. The biggest contributor to the search was Australia with US $32 million as of May 6, followed by Vietnam and United States with US $8 million and US $6.9 million (including 3.3 million already spent and a new allocation of 3.6 million), respectively as of April 5.[147] Two other key stakeholders in the hunt, China and Malaysia, though having deployed a substantial number of assets, did not disclose their operating costs.

The search for the missing flight would have been impossible for Malaysia without other countries contributing personnel and assets. The crisis of flight MH370 is a powerful example of a type of security challenge confronting ASEAN, which certainly exceeds the capability of a single nation to handle. Willingness to allocate resources to the international search efforts is also a positive sign for future ASEAN multilateral military cooperation because it shows that member countries can contribute resources to address problems of common concern.

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[146] Tom Allard and Amy McNeilage, "Most Expensive Aviation Search: $53 Million to Find Flight MH370," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 5, 2014, accessed July 4, 2014, http://www.smh.com.au/national/most-expensive-aviation-search-53-million-to-find-flight-mh370-20140404-36463.html.

[147] Ibid.

Overall, the search for the disappearing aircraft was unprecedented in terms of the number of nations involved, assets committed, and resources mobilized. It highlights the willingness of participating countries to contribute their resources to joint search efforts. The key lesson that emerged is that when resources are available, they must be employed in a closely coordinated fashion to achieve results. Otherwise, the undertaking will prove to be a waste of time, money, and effort.

## Coordination

A review of the hunt for the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 shines a harsh light on the operation and also poses the question of the what role should ASEAN, as an organization, play in such a disaster. Lack of coordination and miscommunication hindered both the determination of the flight-route and the response to its disappearance, complicating search efforts.[148] Lack of information existed about not only the vanished aircraft, but also the actual search operation. This was true not only among the various Malaysian agencies, but among participating countries.

The Malaysian government came under fire by the international press due to its poor initial handling of the disaster. In fact, the government played a weak role in coordinating its agencies to respond to the crisis, leading to the release of incomplete, contradictory, and sometimes inaccurate information, especially with regard to the last point and time of contact with the aircraft.[149] This confusion and inconsistency was

[148] Schofield, Torr, and Perrett, "MH370 Search Coordination Lapses Echo Global Issues."

[149] Denyer, "Contradictory Statements from Malaysia over Missing Airliner Perplex, Infuriate."

partially due to poor coordination between Malaysia's military and the civilian administration. As a former U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia, James Keith, commented "they [Malaysians] don't have the necessary structure for inter-agency coordination."[150] For instance, "although Malaysian military radar tracked a then-unidentified aircraft across its airspace early on March 8, this was not linked into the investigation by civilian authorities for almost two days."[151] The Malaysian civil-military disconnect hampered the response to the disappearance of the jetliner, adding needless complexity to the search.

Close coordination and cooperation among participating countries and entities in the multinational search operation were far from effective. According to an observation at China's National Institute for South China Sea Studies, the parties actually searched independently and separately, so this was not really a multinational search.[152] In fact, twenty-two days after the plane's disappearance,[153] there was no real central coordination per se until Australia established and led a joint agency coordination center after the

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[150] Andy Pasztor and Jon Ostrower, "Poor Coordination Led to Flawed Search for Missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 2014, accessed July 2, 2014, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304886904579 47127 2412709930.

[151] Schofield, Torr and Perrett, "MH370 Search Coordination Lapses Echo Global Issues."

[152] Branigan, "Malaysia Flight MH370 Hunt Sees Suspicion and Cooperation."

[153] Prime Minister of Australia, "Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston to Lead Joint Agency Coordination Center," March 30, 2014, accessed July 4, 2014, http://www.pm. gov.au/media/2014-03-30/air-chief-marshal-angus-houston-lead-joint-agency-coordination-centre.

search for the aircraft was confined to the southern Indian Ocean.[154] Furthermore, Malaysian officials did not feel it was their role to ensure that foreign experts share refined data among themselves. This is the reason why two investigative teams were established: one, analyzed radar data and modeled the aircraft's expected performance in order to calculate the plane's likely speed and fuel consumption; the other examined satellite data in order to calculate the plane's likely trajectory. The two teams failed to coordinate their analyses promptly. This lack of coordination hampered search efforts for at least three days.[155]

In summary, poor coordination contributed to ineffectiveness and unnecessary complications in the international search operation. This case shows clearly that when responding to a crisis that requires multinational efforts, close coordination is a matter of fundamental importance.

## Tangible Result

It would not be an exaggeration to state that ineffective cooperation and coordination among the countries participating in the hunt for the vanished Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 was largely responsible for the lack of success in finding the plane. The large number of nations united in this unprecedented search and rescue operation showed the significance of cooperation in the face of crisis. The tremendous

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[154] Tony Seed, "The Mystery of the Malaysian Flight MH370 and Obama's Asia Pivot," Crescent International, April 11, 2014, accessed July 4, 2014, http://www.crescent-online.net/2014/04/the-mystery-of-malaysia-flight-mh370-and-obamas-asia-pivot-tony-seed-4398-articles.html.

[155] Pasztor and Ostrower, "Poor Coordination Led to Flawed Search for Missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370."

amount of personnel, assets, and money poured into the search signified the willingness of countries to cooperate for good. However, because of lack of coordination and cooperation, the massive international search was unsuccessful. Although the search for the missing flight highlighted the goodwill and enthusiasm of some countries, others took part with modest to minimal commitment. The lack of coordination led to confusion in detecting the flight's route, and resulted in searching the wrong area for several days. The search area changed a number of times due to poor coordination. Mutual suspicions undermined the joint efforts, preventing some nations from making whole-hearted contributions to the search operation. It is still early to conclude that the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 was a complete failure, but what has happened so far proves the ineffectiveness of regional partner-actions due to shortcomings in coordination and cooperation.

## The Malacca Straits Patrols, a Tangible Result of Military Cooperation among Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand; an Example Worthy of Expansion in ASEAN

The joint patrols of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand in the Malacca Strait are the most practical and successful example regarding military cooperation in the ASEAN region. The Malacca Strait is widely known not only for its strategic importance, but also for the grave danger posed by pirate activities and the threat of terrorism. The Strait is 900 kilometers (550 miles) in length and only 2.7 kilometers (1.7 miles) wide at its narrowest point, making it one of the world's most strategic chokepoints in global sea

routes.[156] The strait is of critical commercial significance because it serves as a link between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The Malacca Strait allows for the transit of forty percent of global trade. More than fifty thousand merchant ships sail through the waterway every year.[157] Due to its vulnerable geographic location and commercial vitality, the Malacca Strait has historically been a natural paradise for seafaring bandits.

In response to the threat posed by piracy and potential terrorism, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore began to carry out trilateral Malacca Straits Sea Patrols (MSSP) in 2004. To reinforce these operations, the three littoral countries and Thailand launched another initiative of air patrols called "Eyes-in the-Sky" (EiS) in 2005.[158] EiS was an effort to strengthen the sea patrols with aerial surveillance over the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. Also, the participating countries share intelligence through the MSP Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG), formed in 2006 to support the sea and air patrols. This organization in turn set up an information-sharing system known as the Malacca

[156] Reuters, "Factbox-Malacca Strait is a 'Strategic Chokepoint'," March 4, 2014, accessed May 9, 2014, http://in.reuters.com/article/2010/03/04/idINIndia-46652220100304.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Nazery Khalid, "Security in the Straits of Malacca," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 1 June 2006, accessed May 10, 2014, http://www.japanfocus.org/-Nazery-Khalid/2042.

Strait Patrols Information System (MSP-IS).[159] Collectively, MSSP, EiS, and IEG constitute a broader network of the MSP. Thailand formally joined MSP in 2008.[160]

The MSP initiatives illustrate the political commitment of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to improve security and safety in the Strait of Malacca. Since it was put in place, MSP has proven to be effective and successful, turning the waters infested by bandits into a near zero-pirate-incident area. The level of effectiveness and contributing factors will be thoroughly examined as follows.

## Analysis

### Political Will

There is no day without the patrol.[161]

The common goal among Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand is their firm determination to curb piracy and enhance security in the Malacca Strait. The Malaysian Defense Minister, Najib Razak, affirmed, "The objective is to make the Strait of Malacca very, very secure."[162] It is noteworthy that the littoral states, though seriously

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[159] Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 248.

[160] Ministry of Defense of Singapore, "Thailand Joins Malacca Straits Patrols," MINDEF, September 18, 2008, accessed May 12, 2014, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2008/sep/18sep08_nr.html#.VEXOxE8cRjo.

[161] Salim Osman, "'Eyes on the Sky' Patrols over Strait to Start next Week," World Security Network, September 11, 2005, accessed May 15, 2014, http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/Terrorism/ Osman-Salim/Eyes-in-the-sky-patrols-over-strait-to-start-next-week.

[162] Reuters, "Malaysia Open to Joint Patrol Talks in Malacca Strait," April 17, 2007, accessed May 10, 2014, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2007/04/17/security-malacca-idUKKLR22534120070417.

divided in the past over territorial disputes, have overcome differences and joined hands for the common goal. The perspectives of the four governments on how to approach the insecurity at the waterway have experienced a sea change. Indonesia and Malaysia, which used to see the problem of piracy as purely a domestic concern to be solved internally by each state, openly and willingly have taken part in the collaborative initiatives.[163] It dawned on the four states that no country could solve the problem on its own, and a cooperative multinational approach was thus a necessity.

Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand all exhibit a strong commitment to and confidence in assuring the security of the strait. As Singapore's Chief of Defense Force, Lieutenant General Ng Yat Chung remarked, "The Malacca Straits Patrol arrangement demonstrates the political resolve of our respective countries in meeting the security challenges in a holistic, cooperative, and committed manner."[164] A captain in the Royal Malaysian Navy described the spirit of the Malacca Strait cooperation as "to paint the picture to the world that the Strait is not really a war-risk zone."[165] The countries

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[163] Catherine Zara Raymond, "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Strait: A Problem Solved?" *Naval War College Review* 62, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 31-42, accessed May 12, 2014, https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/7835607e-388c-4e70-baf1-b00e9fb443f1/Piracy-and-Armed-Robbery-in-the-Malacca-Strait--A-.aspx.

[164] Ministry of Defense of Singapore, "Remarks by Chief of Defense Force LG Ng Yat Chung at the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) Joint Coordinating Committee Terms of References and Standard Operating Procedure Signing Ceremony," MINDEF, April 21, 2006, accessed May 14, 2014, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/content/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2006/apr/21apr06_nr.html#.U74FXpSSyht.

[165] Michael Schuman, "How to Defeat Pirates: Success in the Strait," *Time*, April 22, 2009, accessed May 12, 2014, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1893032,00.html.

along the Strait have done their utmost to transform their political will into practical initiatives to combat maritime challenges.

The three collaborative programs, namely the Malacca Strait Sea Patrols, the "Eyes-in the-Sky," and the Intelligence Exchange Group were put in place over a three-year period and have come to fruition. The speed and effectiveness with which the initiatives were implemented highlight their seriousness and reflect the genuine commitment of the participating countries to combat maritime insecurity in the Strait region.[166] This demonstrates that Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are fully committed to ensuring security in the Malacca Strait.[167]

## Mutual Trust

The multilateral cooperation to combat maritime insecurity at the Malacca Strait illustrates the growth of mutual trust. The joint efforts to achieve a united aim over time have helped to build trust and dispel suspicion among the littoral stakeholders. Before the Malacca Strait Patrols were in place, mistrust was a persistent problem dividing the four states. As one observer commented, "the main countries along the route-Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore-were not working together. With their militaries distrustful of one another, the governments almost never shared information on pirate activities,

[166] Khalid, "Security in the Straits of Malacca."

[167] Peter Chalk, "Assessing the Recent Terrorist Threat to the Malacca Strait," Combat Terrorism Center-West Point, April 3, 2010, accessed May 14, 2014, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/assessing-the-recent-terrorist-threat-to-the-malacca-strait.

allowing them to operate unchecked."[168] Today distrust is now no longer an issue. The coastal countries have taken concrete steps to permit hot-pursuits into each other's territorial seas, share intelligence, and welcome international participation in helping to safeguard the Strait.

The multilateral military cooperation has strengthened mutual trust among the participating states. Shared trust has enabled both hot-pursuit and permitting patrols to fly into the territory of each another. Ships of the littoral countries are allowed to enter each other's territorial waters when pursuing pirate ships, providing it is communicated first to the host nation.[169] As confidence grew, the three states and Thailand took a further step by launching EiS air patrols to reinforce the sea operation. The EiS program permits aircraft to fly above the waters of the four participating states no less than three nautical miles from land.[170] The EiS initiative is of tremendous significance, indicating the growing trust among the participants, and their willingness to set aside sovereign concerns to cooperate for the common goal.

Another aspect of collective trust is that the patrol participants are willing to share intelligence. Through the MSP Intelligence Exchange Group and MSP Information System, intelligence collected on pirates is disseminated among the joining

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[168] Schuman, "How to Defeat Pirates: Success in the Strait."

[169] Yale Global, "Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore Launch Coordinated Patrol of Malacca Strait," *Jakarta Post*, July 20, 2004, accessed May 15, 2014, http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/indonesia-malaysia-singapore-launch-coordinated-patrol-malacca-strait.

[170] Osman, "'Eyes on the Sky' Patrols Over Strait to Start Next Week."

governments.[171] This enhances transparency, openness, and comprehensive awareness of the joint operation. Collectively sharing information about the situation in the Malacca Strait also reflects a belief in each other's good intentions and is an important commitment to the success of such cooperation.

Cooperation has not solely been confined to the four littoral states' jurisdiction; international involvement is welcomed by MSP in a supporting role. Indonesia's Chief of the Military, General Endriartono stated that the operation would welcome offers of support and assistance from other countries in the form of equipment or skill training.[172] MSP are to be "an open arrangement that may involve the participation of other countries on a voluntary basis, if deemed necessary by the littoral states."[173] As a result, Thailand joined MSP in 2005, becoming an official member in 2008. MSP has received foreign assistance in the forms of capacity building and equipment provision.

The combined efforts by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have gradually eased mutual suspicion among them and instilled confidence and shared trust in its place.

## Available Resources

Given domestic difficulties in the littoral countries, particularly in the case of Indonesia, the assets provided to MSP underscore the commitment of the participants.

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[171] Schuman, "How to Defeat Pirates: Success in the Strait."

[172] Khalid, "Security in the Straits of Malacca."

[173] Yale Global, "Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore Launch Coordinated Patrol of Malacca Strait."

The states taking part in MSSP collectively provide their resources to the program. As part of the operation, each navy contributes between five and seven ships to patrol the Strait of Malacca. For instance, at the start of launching coordinated patrols in 2004, seventeen warships from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore conducted a joint cruise as a show of force in a joint effort to wipe out piracy in the Malacca Strait.[174]

Not only do they provide sea assets, the three littoral states and Thailand make their air assets available to MSP. Under the EiS arrangement, each nation provides two aircraft and commits to flying two sorties a week over the Strait. This equates to at least sixteen hours of continual coverage over the waterway weekly.[175] The available air and sea resources facilitate 24-hour coordinated sea patrols, joint air scouts, and enable quick response to incidents in the Strait.

Of the MSP stakeholders, Indonesia is challenged most by a lack of resources. Based on one estimate, Indonesia possesses less than one hundred operational vessels to patrol three million square kilometers of its territorial waters.[176] Despite being already strained looking after its own maritime territories, Indonesia's ability to take part in MSP at equivalent levels with other participants is praiseworthy.

Another source for MSP comes from international assistance. Among the Strait's international users, Japan and the United States are the most generous donors. "So far,

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[174] Ibid.

[175] Chalk, "Assessing the Recent Terrorist Threat to the Malacca Strait."

[176] Caroline Vavro, "Piracy, Terrorism and the Balance of Power in the Malacca Strait," *Canadian Naval Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 17, accessed May 12, 2014, http://www.navalreview.ca/wp-content/uploads/public/vol4num1/vol4num1art4.pdf.

Japan has been the main donor, having voluntarily contributed more than US $150 million since the 1960s."[177] Similarly, the United States has shown its interest to improve security in the waterway by donating ten new radar systems to monitor the Strait, and assisting the coastal nations to improve their patrol capacities.[178] Given the resources constraints of the local countries, the contributions of international users to MSP are welcome, because they add operational capability to the participants.

## Coordination

MSP have been carried out in a concerted and well-coordinated manner, facilitated by the establishment of a coordinated command structure, a web-based information network, and a command and control information center. Under the MSSP initiative, vessels from the littoral states operate based on a coordinated hotline command structure.[179] Though each side patrols its territorial waters, the commands of four navies constantly maintain coordination and communication of the operation through a hot line. This proves particularly helpful and responsive when in hot pursuit of pirates into each other's sovereign waters.

The littoral states took another concrete step to integrate their patrols by implementing the EiS program. The EiS initiative enables regular reconnaissance sorties

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[177] Desmond Low, "Global Maritime Partnership and the Prospects for Malacca Straits Security," *Pointer: Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces* 34, no. 2 (2008), lasted updated April 24, 2010, accessed May 19, 2014, http://www.mindef.gov.sg/ content/imindef/publications/pointer/journals/2008/v34n2/ feature4.html.

[178] Vavro, "Piracy, Terrorism and the Balance of Power in the Malacca Strait."

[179] Ibid.

linked to a web-based sharing network that assures the flow of information, and better information sharing and updating.[180] Notably, each EiS flight has a combined mission patrol team on board, a mission commander, and observers from each participating country.[181] This command structure makes it easier for the participants to share information and facilitates decision-making.

Perceiving that no state can achieve full comprehensive awareness alone, and understanding that the ability to see and sense what is moving in the Strait is key to the success of the security mission, a MSP Intelligence Exchange Group and a Command and Control Information Center were formed in 2006 and 2009 respectively. Their work involves collecting and analyzing data from shore-based radars and an electronic system that automatically identifies ships passing through the watercourse.[182] Sharing information and having a common operational picture allow the joint effort to identify threats and act quickly.

Undoubtedly, the closely coordinated and well-structured patrols have enhanced the effectiveness of cooperation, and thus have been fruitful.

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[180] Roderick Chia, Pau Khan Khup Hangzo and Kevin Punzalan, "Maritime Predations in the Malacca Straits: Treading New Water," NTS Insight, August 1, 2009, accessed May 20, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/357742/Maritime_Predations_in_the_Malacca_Straits.

[181] Khalid, "Security in the Straits of Malacca."

[182] Donna Miles, "Strait of Malacca Stands as Model of Multilateral Cooperation," *American Forces Press Service*, accessed May 22, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117353.

Table 4. Tangible Results

| Attempted and Actual Pirate Incidents at the Malacca Strait and Worldwide | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Location | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| M.S. | 28 | 38 | 12 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| W.W. | 445 | 329 | 276 | 239 | 263 | 293 | 410 | 445 | 439 | 297 | 264 |

*Source:* Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Annual Report, January 1-December 31, 2008 and 2013, ICC International Maritime Bureau, accessed May 22, 2014, http://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/request-piracy-report.

By all accounts, the MSP has been remarkably effective and successful. The salient indicator of this success is a sharp reduction in piratical incidents. Pirate attacks in the Malacca Strait are at all-time low, plunging from thirty-eight in 2004 to only one case in 2013. Only one year after having added the Malacca Strait to its list of war-risk zones in 2006, the prestigious insurance firm, Lloyds of London, recognized the significant improvement of security and safety of the waterway by removing the Strait from the list.[183] From being a pirate-prone area, the Malacca Strait has come close to being a zero-pirate-incident waterway.

The concrete result of MSP is not only a drastic reduction of pirate incidents but also reflects the rise of mutual trust, confidence, and interoperability among the littoral countries over time. Major General Michael A. Keltz, U.S. Pacific Command's director of strategic planning and policy remarked, "Countries [Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand] that resisted engaging in multilateral, multinational operations now are

[183] ASIAONE-Malaysia, "Malacca Straits Piracy Down due to Sea-air Patrols," April 24, 2014, accessed May 25, 2014, http://news.asiaone.com/news/malaysia/malacca-straits-piracy-down-due-sea-air-patrols.

doing so."[184] Allowing patrols into one another's territories, willingly sharing intelligence about the Strait, and developing MSP command structures are all positive results of their intense anti-pirate efforts. This reflects the improvement of confidence and mutual trust among the participants.

In addition, MSP has also served to harmonize relationship among the participant countries. Robust cooperation of the littoral countries helps to mute territorial disputes that might otherwise fester. Such collaborative programs ensure that conflict is less likely to erupt in the Malacca Strait region. Thus, MSP has contributed to a more cooperative spirit of peaceful and harmonious relationships between the participating countries.

## Summary and Conclusions

Table 5. The Analytical Result of Two Case Studies

| Case Studies Criteria | MH370 Search | Malacca Strait Patrols |
|---|---|---|
| Political Will | 0 | +1 |
| Mutual Trust | -1 | +1 |
| Available Resources | +1 | 0 |
| Coordination | -1 | +1 |
| Tangible Result | -1 | +1 |
| Totaling Scores | -2 | +4 |

*Source:* Created by author.

The scope and scale of the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 and the Malacca Strait Patrols clearly exceeded the capability of a single nation

[184] Miles, "Strait of Malacca Stands as Model of Multilateral Cooperation."

acting alone. Therefore, multinational military coordination and cooperation was clearly a necessity. The participating countries were mostly members of ASEAN who historically had favored bilateral cooperation. Both cases show that ASEAN member nations have been gradually shifting to multinational approaches. However, the two case studies exemplify both the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of security cooperative practices in Southeast Asia. Despite the massive resources that were committed, the international search efforts for MH370 were ineffective due to lack of mutual trust and lapses in coordination. The goodwill of many of the participants and their contributions were nullified by some nations' focus on narrow, national self-interest. In contrast, MSP stands out as a clear success. Though operating with much more limited resources, the MSP has been effective because of strong political commitments and shared trust among its participants, combined with well-orchestrated and closely-coordinated implementation of operations.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore ASEAN's collective security practices, investigate the potential benefits of closer military-to-military coordination and cooperation within ASEAN, and the challenges to such close relations. Chapter 5 will briefly recapitulate the key findings drawn from the review of the literature and the analysis of the two case studies in order answer the research questions put forth in Chapter 1. Finally, this thesis will make recommendations for strengthening multilateral military cooperation in ASEAN and for further study.

The key findings are as follows. The first secondary research question was: How does each ASEAN member country view their security interests in the region? A sea change has taken place in ASEAN members' perception of security ties. From the initial rejection of multinational military approaches, ASEAN members are now willing to consider a multilateral approach favorably. More importantly, the relatively stable politics as well as the absence of intra-member conflict and internal adversaries facilitate the process of intensifying defense cooperation in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, ASEAN stresses multinational military ties as an indispensable part of holistic solutions to security concerns facing ASEAN, directly strengthening and ultimately contributing to the realization of an ASEAN Political Security Community. All the ASEAN members state their commitments and express the political will to speed up military cooperation, and recognize the benefits of such a multilateral approach. Both in perception and reality,

security concerns in Southeast Asia defy national boundaries; hence, they will be better solved through multilateral military coordination and collaborations.

The second secondary research question was: What are the key cooperation frameworks and mechanisms existing in ASEAN that guide military cooperation? From originally having no permanent structure with which to deal with security matters, ASEAN has formalized and institutionalized a comprehensive set of military cooperative frameworks and mechanisms. The most important ones includes the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Political Security Community Blueprint, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting and ADMM-Plus. The inception of these frameworks and mechanisms reflect genuine commitment to a multilateral approach to defense issues by ASEAN member nations, and lays a firm foundation to expand military-to-military cooperation in the region.

Secondary research question number three was: How does ASEAN's geographic location influence its security situation? ASEAN's geographic location is of vital importance; any disruption of security and stability in the region will have dire impact not only on this area, but on global trade as well. Southeast Asia serves as a bridge connecting the world's economic powers. The region possesses the world's busiest and most strategically vital waterways, which allow the transit of almost fifty percent of the global maritime commerce annually. Moreover, the area is surrounded by oceans, and its geographic dispersal makes ASEAN subject to natural disasters of many kinds. The significance and vulnerability of ASEAN's location compels all its member states to seek deeper and wider security ties in order to safeguard their interests, and contribute to global stability and the larger global economy.

Secondary research question number four: What are ASEAN's combined military capabilities? Rapid economic growth in the past decades has enabled ASEAN member states to increase their defense expenditures. Actual defense spending in Southeast Asia has experienced an average growth of six percent annually, amounting US$ 38.7 billion in 2013. Moreover, ASEAN's militaries have undergone a modernization process to enhance operational capacity. Altogether, ASEAN possesses a substantial amount of manpower consisting of more than two million active military personnel, and assets of 1,850 ships and 3,530 aircraft. Those military assets and personnel are of great use to cope with diverse security challenges in the region.

Secondary research question number five: What are the current security challenges ASEAN nations are facing? Security problems confronting Southeast Asia tend to be imminent, trans-border, transnational, pressing in nature, and are on the rise. They range from maritime insecurity, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises, to terrorism and transnational crimes. Since many security crises may exceed the response capacity of any one country, single-nation solutions may be ineffective and inadequate. Thus, the need to address security challenges has impelled ASEAN member states to seek greater collective cooperation.

Secondary research question number six: What are the ongoing military ties in the region and how effective are they? Recently, military-to-military coordination and cooperation within ASEAN frameworks has experienced significant, positive developments. Defense links in Southeast Asia have now moved from a "spider-web" model of bilateral relationships to the multilateral cooperative mechanisms of ADMM and ADMM-Plus. ASEAN's current military cooperation practices concentrate on

maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, defense interaction programs, and military education and training exchanges. The number of multinational military exercises conducted, and practical defense cooperative programs implemented, during the past few years speaks for the marked increase of ASEAN's military cooperation. Although, cooperation in ASEAN's defense sector is progressing, it is still in a preliminary stage, and not yet fully developed. To intensify multinational defense cooperation in ASEAN, the benefits as well as the barriers to the process, must be carefully weighed.

Primary research question: What are the potential benefits and challenges of greater multilateral military-to-military coordination and cooperation within the ASEAN framework?

The most important benefits to multilateral military cooperation lie in combating transnational security challenges in Southeast Asia, helping to harmonize ASEAN's internal and external relationships, and building up mutual trust and confidence. Such cooperation therefore serves to defuse internal tensions and ultimately rule out intra-member conflicts. As a result, members are more likely to cast aside differences and join hands in a collective front to assure that ASEAN nations and the entire region are more secure and stable.

In a strategically broader sense, success in military integration and collective security will give ASEAN a weightier collective voice when interacting with the outside world. This explains why ADMM-Plus attracts many of the world powers like the United States, China, Russia, Japan, etc. to cooperate for peace, but not war. Internally, achievements in the military cooperation will directly make the association stronger by

fostering a secure and stable environment in Southeast Asia. Such an environment would likely contribute to strengthening ASEAN's political-security pillar and help realize a more prosperous ASEAN community. A stable region would facilitate its economic development and allow ASEAN to continue to be a strategic partner with the world powers.

Multilateral military approaches indeed would enable ASEAN to respond to security menaces in a joint and effective manner. The availability of defense personnel and assets in ASEAN would be available to respond to crisis events. In terms of long-term benefits, habitual military cooperation will likely enhance interoperability, interchangeability, and cooperation among ASEAN's militaries. In other words, multilateral cooperative military practices will likely improve ASEAN's preparedness, readiness, and responsiveness to cope with increasing security challenges in the region, regardless of the character of those challenges.

Confidence and mutual trust have taken the form of political resolve, resulting in the institutionalization of military cooperative frameworks, the inception of ADMM and ADMM-Plus, and the proposal of a regional defense industry as well as a number of practical security cooperation programs in ASEAN. Thanks to intensified endeavors, ASEAN members, which used to reject multilateral military cooperation, now welcome multinational approaches. Suspicion and mutual distrust continue to abate. The use of the military to collectively combat security issues provides ASEAN members the opportunity to enhance mutual confidence and trust in a multinational approach. Even though the benefits of such cooperation are clear, there are also barriers to the process.

## Obstacles to Closer Military-to-Military Coordination and Cooperation in ASEAN

Mutual trust and interoperability cannot be created overnight, but rather require an extended process of enduring and continuous cooperation and collaboration. Lack of trust and interoperability has been a historical reality. It continues to be a barrier to closer multilateral military cooperation within ASEAN. As shown in the case studies, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand are now able to cooperate militarily with increased shared trust and confidence in joint MSP due to years of working closely with each other. Conversely, the hunt for flight MH370 suffered from mutual suspicion and a lack of interoperability perhaps because it was the first time that so many nations attempted to collaborate in an event of such scope and scale on such short notice. Given the existent spider-web of bilateral defense agreements between the member countries and increased political commitment to multilateral military cooperation among ASEAN members, mutual trust and interoperability should continue to improve.

Although there is a genuine consensus in favor of deepening ASEAN military cooperation, political will still varies from one member state to another, and the lack of political commitment remains an obstacle at times. Member nations are likely to place their national interests under ASEAN's collective benefits only if multilateral cooperation does not require that they compromise their own interests. Other members are willing to contribute assets and personnel, but ASEAN's cooperation in the military sphere is likely to operate in a resource-constrained environment. After all, the first priority of ASEAN states is their own domestic agenda. Inevitably, there will be obstacles, differing political systems, incompatible domestic issues, and conflicting national interests that are likely to impede the progress of multilateral military integration in Southeast Asia for some time

to come. A well-orchestrated and well-structured command and control system is a necessity to ensure that multilateral military cooperation is effective, and to avoid operational failures.

Command and control among ten militaries with various capabilities and doctrine systems is a Gordian knot that is very difficult to unravel. It remains a significant challenge. The command and control structure that would work best for ASEAN is an open question. There are no easy answers. A centralized command and control system, i.e., a standing military body within ASEAN headquarters is still absent. This deficiency limits ASEAN's ability to respond to crises in a coordinated and effective manner. Waiting until a catastrophe strikes before establishing an effective ASEAN command architecture will be too late. The two case studies of the Malacca Strait Patrols and the search of MH370 serve as examples that should motivate ASEAN to embrace further multilateral cooperation. Organizational paralysis at the outset in the search for MH370 demonstrates the need for central coordination and a joint command and control structure; both of which were almost non-existent, impeding the international search efforts. In contrast, the case of MSP has been very successful largely due to a well-constructed multinational command structure.

## Recommendations

Secondary research question number seven asks: What kind of military organization structure in ASEAN should be set up to facilitate its military cooperation? From the analysis it appears that significant work is required before ASEAN can construct a suitable and effective command and control structure. Forming a standing military body is a necessary step that ASEAN now could take to ensure effectiveness and

avoid possible lapses in multilateral military cooperation. Such an organization should consist of military experts from member states who specialize in different areas, and would serve as a permanent liaison, planning, and operating staff. This body would work closely with the ten ASEAN member militaries to facilitate the standardization of common operational procedures, and function as a central command and control cell in charge of coordinating joint military cooperative efforts under existing or future ASEAN military cooperation frameworks. Moreover, a specialized military organ would act like a "plug and play" coordination mechanism to which each military would be able to "plug in" by contributing its own information and assets. This organ would facilitate the coordination of joint planning and execution processes. The end result would be an enhanced capacity on the part of ASEAN and its member states to respond to transnational security challenges.

An ASEAN official agreement on intelligence sharing should be reached and come into force in order to increase transparency, mutual trust, and collective situational understandings in the specified areas of cooperation. The lack of a formal information exchange mechanism among the partners in the search of the missing Malaysian flight MH370 helps explain why some countries dithered in determining what level and type of information they were willing to disclose. Having this agreement in place would make it easier for ASEAN to share pertinent information, thus helping to achieve common understanding and improve collective trust.

Multinational defense practices in Southeast Asia should not be limited to military exercises and discussion. Practical plans and preparations should be set in place before real crises occur in order to be ready when emergencies strike. Joint deployment in the

event of crisis would create bonds and common understandings, and interoperability among ASEAN's militaries. Stimulating an ASEAN collective defense industry should be strongly encouraged and concretized for the many direct and indirect benefits it would provide ASEAN partners in the form of economic stimulus and standardized equipment. Now is the time for ASEAN to act. Tangible steps are needed to implement the proposal of a regional defense industry. More importantly, ASEAN must be sure to maintain its pivotal role in regional military cooperation. Participation of others to enhance the security environment of ASEAN should be welcomed, but not at the expense of turning ASEAN into a competing arena for big powers motivated by their own interests. The centrality of ASEAN and the collective security interests of its members must be a prerequisite to the implementation of multilateral military cooperation in the region.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Given the limited time available to conduct this research, it was impractical, if not impossible, to dissect every aspect of ASEAN military cooperation arrangements in depth. Yet there are still many other areas for scholarly research. ASEAN's military integration process is still in a preliminary stage. Much remains to be done for the association to shape and evolve a command structure that will allow such cooperation to take place in a smooth and effective manner. The challenges associated with the design of a feasible and effective command and control architecture to facilitate ASEAN's multilateral military cooperation is worthy of more academic research. The strategic challenge of maintaining ASEAN's independent role while engaging big powers in a collective front to combat transnational security issues in Southeast Asia remains a fertile field for scholars to explore and diplomats to act upon.

## Conclusion

The closer military and political integration between ASEAN member states would serve as an essential step in enhancing their individual and collective security. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is unified and committed to achieving a stronger community. Given the current positive environment, intensifying multilateral military cooperation to combat transnational security challenges is an important opportunity to strengthen multilateral political and military ties between ASEAN member states in order to foster greater regional security. Given the trans-national nature of many current and potential security threats, there is no single national solution that adequately addresses the range of security needs. Thus, multilateral approaches to security menaces in Southeast Asia are essential. Molding the militaries of ten different ASEAN states into a collective front to enhance security and stability in the region has already proven beneficial. Success in military integration will very likely boost ASEAN's solidarity and unity, help to reduce inter-member conflicts, and increase its capacity to cope with security issues as well as to interact with global actors from a stronger collective diplomatic stance. However, differences in national interest, military capability, and command and control structures and procedures still present difficulties to ASEAN's military integration for some time ahead. To conclude, closer multilateral military-to-military cooperation in Southeast Asia is needed to in order to effectively address current and emerging trans-national security challenges. Such closer cooperation would benefit not only ASEAN member nations, but also the global community.

APPENDIX A

KEY MILESTONES OF ASEAN'S EVOLUTION AND SECURITY COOPERATION

| Time | Events | Countries Involved | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| August 8, 1967 | Establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) | Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand | Five Founding Countries |
| 1971 | Declaration of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOFAN) | Five Founding Countries | |
| 1976 | Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia Signed (TAC) | Five Founding Countries | |
| January 8, 1984 | Brunei Joined ASEAN | The Sixth Member | |
| 1991 | ASEAN Army Rifles Meet (AARM) Initiated | ASEAN's then Member Countries | Annual Event |
| 1994 | Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) | ASEAN Members and Asia Pacific Countries | Held Annually |
| 1995<br><br><br><br><br>July 28, 1995 | • Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Signed<br>• Vietnam Joined ASEAN | Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand<br><br>The Seventh Member | |
| July 23, 1997 | Laos and Myanmar Joined ASEAN | The Eighth and Ninth Members | |
| April 30, 1999 | Cambodia Joined ASEAN | The Tenth Member | |
| 2000 | ASEAN Chiefs of Armies Multilateral Meeting (ACAMM) | Ten ASEAN Members | Annual Event |
| 2001 | ASEAN Navy Interaction (ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting (ANCM) | | ASEAN Navy Interaction Renamed to ANCM in 2010 |

| Time | Events | Countries Involved | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2002 | • ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) Formed | ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces | Annual Event |
| | • ASEAN Military Intelligence Informal Meeting (AMIIM) Established | ASEAN Member States' Heads of Military Intelligence | Annual Event |
| 2003 | Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |
| 2004 | Launch of Malacca Strait Sea Patrols (MSSP) * | Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand | Thailand Officially Joined in 2008 |
| 2005 | Initiation of "Eye in the Sky" (EiS) * | Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand | Air Patrols |
| 2006 | • Establishment of Intelligence Sharing Group (ISG) * | Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand | * MSSP, EIS and ISG Form Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP) Operating outside ASEAN's Frameworks |
| May 9, 2006 | • Inception of ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | Held Annually |
| 2007 | ASEAN Vision 2020 Adopted | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |
| 2008 | ASEAN Charter Published | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |
| March 1, 2009 | 14th ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Leaders Adopted the APSC Blueprint | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |

| Time | Events | Countries Involved | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | • Establishment of ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)<br>• Five Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) were Established | Ten ASEAN Member Countries and Eight Partner Countries: Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and the U.S. | • Held Bi-annually<br>• Five EWGs: Maritime Security, Counter-terrorism, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management, Peacekeeping Operations and Military Medicine |
| 2011 | • 5th ADMM Adopted the Concept Paper on the Establishment of ASEAN Defense Industry Collaboration (ADIC) and on the Establishment of ASEAN Peacekeeping Centers | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |
| | • ASEAN Military Operational Informal Meeting (AMOIM) Incepted | ASEAN Member State's Heads of Operations | Annual Event |
| | • ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medicine Meeting (ACMMC) Initiated | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | Annual Event |
| | • ASEAN Sergeant Major Annual Meeting (ASMAM) Established | | |
| 2012 | ADMM-Plus EWG on Military Medicine and Maritime Security Conducted a Table-Top Exercise | Ten ASEAN Members and Eight Partner Countries | |

| Time | Events | Countries Involved | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | • 7th ADMM Endorsed on New Initiatives on Establishing ASEAN Defense Interaction Program and Establishment of Logistics Support Framework | Ten ASEAN Member Countries | |
| | • Establishment of a New ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action | Ten ASEAN Member Countries and Eight Partner Countries | |
| June 17-20 | • ADMM-Plus HADR/Military Medicine Exercise (HADR/MM) | 18 ADMM-Plus Members | Held in Brunei |
| September 9-13 | • ADMM-Plus Counterterrorism Exercise (CTX) | 18 ADMM-Plus Members | Held in Sentul, Indonesia |
| September 28-October 1 | • ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise | 18 ADMM-Plus Members | Held in Sydney, Australia |
| 2014<br>February 11-14 | • A Table-Top Exercise under the framework of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations | 18 ADMM-Plus Members | Held Manila, Philippines |

| Time | Events | Countries Involved | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 21 | • Three-Year Work Program 2014-2015 and the Concept Paper on Establishment of a Direct Communication Link at the 8th ADMM Adopted | ASEAN Members | Held in Mynanmar |

*Source*: Created and synthesized by author.

APPENDIX B

ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES


*Source:* South East Asia Canada Business Council, "ASEAN Countries," accessed November 7, 2014, http://www.aseancanada.com/ASEAN%20Countries.html.

# APPENDIX C

## Selected Basic ASEAN Indicators

Table 1

**Selected basic ASEAN indicators**

as of 15 August 2014

ASEAN Statistics

| Country | Total land area | Total population 1/ | Population density 1/ | Annual population growth 1/ | Gross domestic product at current prices | Gross domestic product per capita at current prices | | International merchandise trade 4/ | | | Foreign direct investments inflow 5/6/ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Exports | Imports | Total trade | | |
| | km² | thousand | persons per km² | percent | US$ million | US$ 2/ | US$ PPP 3/ | US$ million | US$ million | US$ million | US$ million | US$ million |
| | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Brunei Darussalam | 5,769 | 406.2 | 70 | 1.6 | 16,117.5 | 39,678.7 | 53,016.9 | 11,445.4 | 3,611.8 | 15,057.2 | 864.8 | 908.4 |
| Cambodia | 181,035 | 14,962.6 | 83 | 1.5 | 15,659.0 | 1,046.5 | 2,652.6 | 9,148.2 | 9,176.0 | 18,324.2 | 1,557.1 | 1,274.9 |
| Indonesia | 1,860,360 | 248,818.1 | 134 | 1.4 | 862,567.9 | 3,466.7 | 5,132.5 | 182,551.9 | 186,628.7 | 369,180.5 | 19,137.9 | 18,443.8 |
| Lao PDR | 236,800 | 6,644.0 | 28 | 2.0 | 10,002.0 | 1,505.4 | 3,127.2 | 2,592.8 | 3,292.0 | 5,884.9 | 294.4 | 426.7 |
| Malaysia | 330,290 | 29,948.0 | 91 | 1.5 | 312,071.6 | 10,420.5 | 17,540.5 | 228,276.3 | 205,985.3 | 434,261.6 | 9,400.0 | 12,297.4 |
| Myanmar | 676,577 | 61,573.8 | 91 | 1.0 | 56,408.0 | 916.1 | 1,834.7 | 11,436.3 | 12,009.1 | 23,445.4 | 1,354.2 | 2,620.9 |
| Philippines | 300,000 | 99,384.5 | 331 | 1.8 | 269,024.6 | 2,706.9 | 4,545.9 | 53,978.3 | 65,130.6 | 119,108.9 | 2,797.0 | 3,859.8 |
| Singapore | 715 | 5,399.2 | 7,550 | 1.8 | 297,945.0 | 55,103.3 | 85,083.5 | 410,249.7 | 373,015.0 | 783,265.5 | 59,011.5 | 60,844.9 |
| Thailand | 513,120 | 68,251.0 | 133 | 0.5 | 387,534.1 | 5,678.1 | 9,872.7 | 228,730.2 | 249,517.1 | 478,247.3 | 10,699.2 | 12,999.8 |
| Viet Nam | 330,951 | 89,708.9 | 271 | 1.1 | 171,219.3 | 1,908.6 | 4,026.1 | 132,664.1 | 132,109.9 | 264,774.0 | 8,368.0 | 8,900.0 |
| **ASEAN** | ***4,435,617*** | ***625,096.3*** | **139** | **1.3** | ***2,398,549.6*** | ***3,837.1*** | ***6,135.7*** | ***1,271,073.2*** | ***1,240,476.3*** | ***2,511,549.5*** | ***114,284.0*** | ***122,376.5*** |

Sources: ASEAN Finance and Macro-economic Surveillance Unit Database, ASEAN Merchandise Trade Statistics Database, ASEAN Foreign Direct Investment Statistics Database (compiled/computed from data submission, publications and/or websites of ASEAN Member States' national statistics offices, central banks and relevant government agencies, and from international sources)

Symbols used:
- -: not available as of publication time
- n.a.: not applicable/not available/not compiled
- Data in *italics* are the latest updated/revised figures from previous posting.

Notes:
1/ Refers to/based on mid-year total population based on country projections
2/ Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar 2013 country figures are not yet available; these figures taken from IMF WEO April 2014
3/ Computed based on IMF WEO Database April 2014 estimates and the latest actual country data
4/ ASEAN IMTS Database 2013 figures are as of 24 July 2014
5/ Unless otherwise indicated, figures include equity, reinvested earnings and inter-company loans
6/ FDI, 2013 figures are preliminary as of 30 July 2014

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